OVER THE JUNGLE TRAILS

Ted Scott
Flying Stories

FRANKLIN W. DIXON

OVER THE JUNGLE TRAILS

F·W·
DIXON

GROSSET
& DUNLAP

Lloyd E. Grasse. 12/25/30.

9 =

SOMETHING STRUCK THE TAWNY BODY OF THE JAGUAR.
Ted Scott : Over the Jungle Trails. *Frontispiece* (*Page* 161)

THE TED SCOTT FLYING STORIES

OVER THE JUNGLE TRAILS

OR

TED SCOTT AND THE MISSING EXPLORERS

By

FRANKLIN W. DIXON

AUTHOR OF
"OVER THE OCEAN TO PARIS"
"THE LONE EAGLE OF THE BORDER"
"THE HARDY BOYS: THE SECRET OF THE CAVES"

ILLUSTRATED BY

WALTER S. ROGERS

NEW YORK
GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS

BOOKS FOR BOYS

By FRANKLIN W. DIXON

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

THE TED SCOTT FLYING STORIES

OVER THE OCEAN TO PARIS
RESCUED IN THE CLOUDS
OVER THE ROCKIES WITH THE AIR MAIL
FIRST STOP HONOLULU
THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST FLYERS
SOUTH OF THE RIO GRANDE
ACROSS THE PACIFIC
THE LONE EAGLE OF THE BORDER
FLYING AGAINST TIME
OVER THE JUNGLE TRAILS

THE HARDY BOYS MYSTERY STORIES

THE HARDY BOYS: THE TOWER TREASURE
THE HARDY BOYS: THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF
THE HARDY BOYS: THE SECRET OF THE OLD MILL
THE HARDY BOYS: THE MISSING CHUMS
THE HARDY BOYS: HUNTING FOR HIDDEN GOLD
THE HARDY BOYS: THE SHORE ROAD MYSTERY
THE HARDY BOYS: THE SECRET OF THE CAVES
THE HARDY BOYS: THE MYSTERY OF CABIN ISLAND

Copyright, 1929, by
GROSSET & DUNLAP, INC.

Over the Jungle Trails

Made in the United States of America

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	In Fearful Peril	1
II	In the Nick of Time	10
III	A Close Call	22
IV	The Jungle Explorers	32
V	On the Wing	43
VI	The Wrath of the Storm	52
VII	A Dangerous Mission	64
VIII	Lost in the Wilds	71
IX	Off for the Jungle	80
X	Speeding Over the Sea	90
XI	A Race for Life	95
XII	Getting in Touch	100
XIII	In Barbarous Hands	108
XIV	Terrible Moments	116
XV	The Trail of the Yellow Death	124
XVI	On the Edge of Disaster	130

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVII	The Jaguar Springs	137
XVIII	Drawing Closer	143
XIX	The Boa Constrictor Strikes	152
XX	Blown to Fragments	160
XXI	Singing Arrows	168
XXII	The Poison Flowers	176
XXIII	Captured	184
XXIV	A Dash for Freedom	193
XXV	A Desperate Struggle	201

OVER THE JUNGLE TRAILS

CHAPTER I

In Fearful Peril

"Looks as if I were in for a spell of dirty weather," said Ted Scott to himself, as he leaned forward in the cockpit of his airplane and anxiously scanned the skies.

What he saw did not tend to reassure him. On the far horizon, deep banks of clouds were piling up and with every moment they grew denser and blacker. The sun, which had been shining brightly when he had started on this air flight from St. Louis to Denver, had now wholly disapppeared. The air had taken on a chill that made its way through the heavy clothing of the young aviator. The wind, too, was rising and it moaned with an eerie sound about the struts of the plane.

"And a good many hundred miles yet to go," muttered Ted, as he looked at the instruments

on the board in front of him. "Got to get a move on, old girl," he said to the plane, as he opened up the throttle.

The gallant plane leaped forward as though it understood its master's words and clove the ether like a comet. In less than no time it was whizzing along at the rate of a hundred and twenty-five miles an hour.

On it went like the wind, and the pilot's eyes glistened as he saw the panorama of wood and plain, mountain and valley, lake and river that unrolled below like a ribbon, quickly seen and then falling behind in a stretch that seemed unending.

Even in his heavy aviator's suit it could be seen that the pilot's figure was tall, lithe and muscular. His features were finely cut and had a distinction all their own. His eyes had the look of those accustomed to scan distant spaces and were as keen as an eagle's. Frank, kindly, laughing eyes they were, and yet on occasion they could take on the glint of steel.

Perhaps no face in the world was better known. Certain it is that none was more admired. For it was the face of Ted Scott, the daring young aviator who had been the first to fly over the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Paris, the first of many dazzling feats that had made him the idol of the American people.

For half an hour after the plane had taken

on its accelerated rate of speed the hum of its motors had the melodious drone that is sweetest music to the ears of an airman.

Then came a change, a knocking, slight at first and infrequent, then growing more insistent. The engine was beginning to miss!

A glance at the tank indicator told Ted that he still had plenty of gasoline in the main tank as well as an additional supply in the reserve tanks in the wings.

He examined as well as he could while in flight all parts of the engine that were within his reach. He could discover nothing wrong. Everything seemed to be functioning as it should. Yet that ominous knocking continued.

His thoughts flew back to the start of his flight at St. Louis. His regular mechanic had been ill and the filling of the tanks had been attended to by an assistant, one not nearly as careful and accurate as his chief.

"Is it possible that grit got in with the gas?" Ted asked himself anxiously. "Wilson is a good fellow, but he doesn't always keep his mind on his work."

The knocking became more pronounced and Ted Scott's uneasiness increased in proportion. If this continued, he would have to look for a landing place in order to overhaul the plane thoroughly.

He was reluctant to do this for two reasons. In the first place, his errand was important and he wanted to reach his destination as soon as possible. Then, too, rain had already commenced to fall and, if he should have to go down, it might be difficult to make a take-off from muddy ground. Still, it might have to be done.

He pushed the stick and darted down from his altitude of three thousand feet. At a height of five hundred feet above the earth he brought his plane to an even keel and flew along with his eyes bent on the ground to find a place sufficiently level to land with safety.

But just when he had discovered such a spot his problem solved itself. The knocking ceased as suddenly as it had begun and again the engine took up its unbroken, monotonous song.

He pulled the stick and again shot upward, for he knew that he would soon be nearing the mountainous district, and he had to have altitude to clear the crags.

By this time the rain, which had begun as a gentle drizzle, was falling in torrents. It dashed in spiteful gusts against the windows of the cockpit and made it difficult to see more than a few hundred yards ahead.

This of itself would not have bothered the young aviator greatly. He had flown many a

time in cloud and fog and darkness, guided simply by his instruments, and he was such a master in reading those instruments that on the occasion when he had flown the Atlantic he had gone like an arrow to the mark, striking the Irish coast within three miles of the spot he had aimed for.

But at that time there had been no other airplanes sailing over the yeasty surges of the ocean. There was no danger of collision. Now, with the great growth of aviation in the United States, the air was crossed and re-crossed by planes flying in every direction. It might very well be that in the darkness he would drive head-on into a plane coming from the opposite direction.

In that event there could be but one issue for both pilots—death! The planes would fall to earth like birds with crippled wings and none could survive such a fall.

So, with his eyes made comparatively useless by the blinding sheets of rain in front of him, Ted strained his ears for any sound of an approaching plane.

Suddenly his heart almost stood still. He had heard that sound!

Distant at first like the almost indistinguishable murmur of a bee, then a buzz like that of a saw cutting through wood, then a raucous

snarl as though the saw had struck a knot, and then a roar gradually swelling into that of a wild beast.

There was no mistake. Another plane was rushing toward him with a speed perhaps as great as his own. Death was abroad!

To Ted it seemed as though the approaching plane was about on the same level as his own.

Like a flash he pulled the stick and his plane shot upward. He figured that, if the unknown pilot should continue on his course, the two machines would pass the one above the other.

But to his consternation he knew from the roar of the other motor that his brother airman had followed the same impulse he himself had had to seek the higher reaches of the air.

Ted swerved desperately to the left. But almost on the instant the stranger did the same. What malignant fate was it that put the same prompting into the mind of each?

They were so near each other now that the sounds of the respective motors could not be separated from each other. They blended in one great roar that seemed to be the knell of doom. They were like blindfolded antagonists seeking each other in the dark.

Ted pushed in his stick and darted downward. Even as he did so, a great shape loomed up in the gloom and rushed past directly over where his plane had been a second before.

They were so close that they almost grazed and Ted could feel the sweep of the wind as the other plane rushed by. It was as though the death angel had brushed him with his wings.

It had been the narrowest of narrow escapes, and Ted Scott's nerves were thrilling with excitement as he brought his plane to an even keel.

"Hardly a thin dime between my plane and his," he muttered, as he wiped away the perspiration that had gathered on his brow. "I'll bet that boy, whoever he is, is thanking his stars right now. I sure am myself."

On went the plane with undiminished speed. Ted suddenly became conscious that he was hungry. He reached over and got a couple of sandwiches which he munched with enjoyment, ending his frugal meal with a drink of hot coffee from his thermos bottle.

The fury of the rain had now abated. But the satisfaction that this brought to the young aviator was only temporary. For the air had grown sharper, and instead of rain great flakes of snow soon came whirling down.

They came softly at first and before long the ground beneath the plane was whitened. The trees and bushes were outlined in snowy tracery and the scene was one of entrancing beauty that would have delighted the soul of an artist.

But not the soul of an airman! Snow and ice are his deadliest enemy. The rain had been annoying, but the snow might well prove deadly, for it bore heavily on the broad wings of the plane and weighted them down.

Before long Ted Scott could feel that the plane was losing its buoyancy. It responded less readily to the controls. It began to lag and wobble. And with every passing moment the load became heavier. The rain with which the wings had been drenched had now turned to ice and above this was the steadily increasing weight of snow.

To make matters worse the wind had risen, and the flakes, instead of falling vertically, were now whirling furiously about in the gusts. There was every sign that a genuine blizzard was impending.

If he could have expected to remain over level ground, the young aviator would not have greatly worried. But he knew that by this time he was approaching the foothills of the Rockies.

And since seemingly misfortunes never come singly, the engine, which for a long time had been behaving beautifully, again began to knock!

There was no help for it. Ted must seek to make a landing, and the sooner the better.

He swooped downward as far as he dared and scanned the earth beneath him. Its white

covering dazzled his eyes and made it difficult to detect the features of the landscape.

He could see, however, that he was over fairly level ground and what seemed to be cultivated land. At some distance he made out the dim blur of a house and outbuildings. He could trace, too, the rail fences that surrounded enclosures many acres in extent.

He selected what seemed to be a long stretch of land suitable for his purpose and came down. The plane ran along bumpily at great speed. Then it struck a rock that had been concealed by the snow—struck it with such force that it overturned and Ted was sent hurtling through the air as though from a catapult.

He struck his head against a stump and fell unconscious and limp in the snow.

He lay there stretched out while the flakes came down and covered him. His arms, his legs, his body disappeared. Then even his face was hidden from sight!

Ted Scott was buried alive in the snow!

CHAPTER II

In the Nick of Time

"What a terrible storm this is getting to be, Grace," said Mrs. Larue to her daughter, looking up from the rocking-chair where she was placidly knitting.

"It surely is, Mother," agreed the girl, as she watched the flakes beating furiously against the window of the comfortable farmhouse. "And it's drifting, too. Hear the howling of the wind! I'd hate to be out on a day like this."

Grace Larue was a charming girl of perhaps twenty years of age. Her face showed not only beauty, but intelligence. Her mother was a plump, pretty matron, upon whom the years had not yet begun to make their mark.

At the moment they were the only occupants of the living room, which was furnished with an elegance scarcely to be looked for in such an isolated spot. There were handsome rugs on the floor, a piano stood in one corner, a well-filled bookcase was at one side and a huge

bearskin lay near the hearth where, in a deep chimney, a log fire crackled. The warmth and coziness of the place seemed all the greater because of contrast with the storm that was raging without.

The girl resumed her reading that had been interrupted by her mother's remark, and for a time there was no sound in the room except the clicking of Mrs. Larue's knitting needles and the rustle of a leaf of the girl's book as it was turned.

"Hark! What was that?" asked Grace in a startled tone, and she sat up straight in an attitude of listening.

"What was what?" inquired Mrs. Larue. "I didn't hear anything."

"Listen!" said Grace. "There it is again. It's louder now. Don't you hear it?"

Mrs. Larue laid down her knitting.

"Bless my soul, yes, I do," she replied. "It's loud enough now to wake the dead. What on earth can it be? I hope it isn't a tornado or a norther coming."

"Nothing like that," Grace reassured her. "It's an airplane, or I miss my guess. Listen to the roar of that engine."

She ran to the window and drew back the curtains.

"That's what it is," she cried. "I can see it now. Come, Mother, quick!"

The sight of an airplane was an event in that quiet place, and Mrs. Larue hurried to her daughter's side.

"So it is," she agreed. "My, but I'm sorry for any airman that has to be out on a day like this. I should think the poor fellow would freeze to death."

"He's coming lower now," observed Grace after a moment. "I do believe he's going to try to make a landing somewhere!"

"I don't see where he can land anywhere around here," replied Mrs. Larue. "I should think he'd wait until he got to an airport where everything's level."

"Perhaps he can't wait," suggested Grace. "I shouldn't wonder if something had gone wrong with his machine. Did you hear how that engine was spluttering?"

"I didn't notice," answered Mrs. Larue. "But, then, my ears aren't as sharp as yours. I do hope he isn't in any trouble."

The two followed the wavering plane with their eyes for a few moments and then the whirling snow hid it from sight.

They turned away reluctantly and Mrs. Larue resumed her knitting while Grace picked up her book. But the girl was possessed by a vague uneasiness and could not fix her attention on the printed page.

That uneasiness was accentuated when,

through the storm, she heard a distinct thud at a little distance. She started up in apprehension.

"Did you hear that noise, Mother?" she asked. "It sounded to me like a heavy body falling."

"Just a tree in the woods, probably," replied Mrs. Larue practically. "If this wind keeps up, there'll be more of them down before to-morrow morning."

"I don't believe it was a tree," declared Grace, jumping up from her chair. "I'm going out to see."

"Out in this storm?" exclaimed Mrs. Larue, aghast. "Child, you're crazy! You'd better stay right here."

"But, Mother," expostulated Grace, "I'm afraid the noise I heard was made by that plane. Perhaps the aviator has met with an accident."

"Get Jotham to go and see," suggested her mother, referring to the hired man.

"I don't know where he is," replied Grace, "and it might take me as long to hunt him up as to go myself. Now, Mother, don't be foolish. You know that I know every inch of this farm, and the place the noise seemed to come from isn't far away. I'll wrap up well and I'll be there and back in no time."

"You might get bewildered in this blizzard

and find you're going in one direction when you think you're going in another. I'm serious Grace," persisted Mrs. Larue.

"I'll guide myself by the rails of the fences," returned the girl. "You must see for yourself that I've got to go, Mother. Suppose Dad were in a position like this aviator's and nobody went to his help."

While the girl was talking she was hastily putting on galoshes and heavy wraps, and now she moved toward the door.

"I suppose you must, Grace," acceded her mother. "But do be careful."

"I will," promised Grace.

The girl opened the door and the knob was torn from her hand by the force of the wind that brought in with it a swirl of snow that sifted over the room.

She pulled it shut with difficulty and bent her head against the storm that now seemed to have reached the climax of its fury, pausing for a moment before venturing forward.

Everything in the world seemed to be lost in a cloud of white. Familiar objects were blotted out. In the blinding whirl she could not see ten feet in front of her.

It was fortunate that, as she had said, she was thoroughly familiar with every inch of the farm. More fortunate still that the rails had not yet been completely buried in the snow.

By resting her hands on these as she went along she was able to keep her course.

The wind cut through her heavy clothing like a knife. It took her breath away. The snow coated her face as with a crystal mask. She struggled through drifts that in places were over her knees. But she kept on.

She at length knew that she must be near the place from which she thought that the noise had come which had startled her.

She peered through the whirling flakes and could discern a large, queer-looking object which she knew must be a plane. It had come down then! Her ears had not misled her.

But where was the aviator? There was no sound or motion near the machine. Had the pilot left it and wandered off in search of shelter—a house or a barn? She knew how slender would be his chance of finding it in that blizzard.

She tripped and almost fell. She had stumbled against something. She looked down and could faintly make out the shape of a human form buried in the snow.

In a moment she was down on her knees, trying frantically to get the snow away from the face of that motionless figure.

Had she come too late? Had death preceded her? Had the man been frozen or smothered?

While these questions are tugging at Grace

Larue's heart as she works desperately, it may be well, for the benefit of those who have not read the preceding volumes of this series, to tell who Ted Scott was and what had been his adventures up to the time this story opens.

Ted had no recollection of his father or mother. His earliest memories were connected with James and Miranda Wilson, a kindly couple who had come, bringing him with them, from New England, to settle in Bromville, a town of the Middle West. They had died when he was about ten years old and he had been adopted by Eben and Charity Browning, a childless pair who loved and brought him up as though he had been their own son.

Eben was the proprietor of the Bromville House, a hotel that had once been prosperous, but had later fallen on evil days. The Brownings had a hard struggle to get along. Ted helped all he could, and when the Devally-Hipson Aero Corporation established its plant in Bromville, the lad got a job in it. He loved the work of making airplanes and soon became expert. His ambition was to be an aviator, but he lacked the necessary money to go to a flying school. That lack was supplied by Walter Hapworth, a young business man of great wealth who had taken a fancy to the lad, and before long Ted Scott knew the intricacies of

flying from start to finish. He then got a place in the Air Mail Service and speedily became known as the most daring and skillful pilot of his division.

When a prize of twenty-five thousand dollars was offered to the one who should make the first non-stop airplane flight from New York to Paris, Ted resolved to try for it. Here again Walter Hapworth backed him, providing the plane and necessary funds for the venture. Veteran airmen entered the competition and Ted's chances were regarded by almost everyone as slight. But he startled the country by flying in two jumps from San Francisco to New York in the fastest time that had ever been made by any aviator flying alone.

Then, on a misty morning, he shot up into the skies over Long Island and turned the nose of his plane toward Europe. The breathless interest that attended his flight, the perils he endured from fog and sleet and gale, how he flew over the yeasty surges of the Atlantic and then like a lone eagle swooped down on Paris, winning the prize and writing his name high on the scroll of deathless fame, are told in the first volume of this series, entitled: "Over the Ocean to Paris."

Overnight he had become one of the famous figures of the world. Honors of all sorts were

showered upon him. The whole American nation hailed him as its idol. But he remained serene, modest, utterly unspoiled.

Shortly after his return came a calamitous flood in the Mississippi Valley. Ted offered his services to the Red Cross and did wonderful work in the stricken districts. Later he rejoined the Air Mail Service, attaching himself to the Rocky Mountain Division, the most hazardous of all. There he had many thrilling adventures and still further increased his reputation.

Later on, a prize was offered for a trip by air from San Francisco to Honolulu. Ted resolved to conquer the Pacific as he had already mastered the Atlantic, and although at times during that perilous flight his life hung by a thread, he accomplished his purpose. It was on this trip that he learned about his real parents, cleared his father's memory of a false accusation, and traced down the actual perpetrators of the crime.

Adventure was in Ted Scott's blood, and he had plenty of it when he set out by air for the West Indies in search of missing companions who had gone there to hunt for hidden treasure. He battled with hurricanes and human enemies, but he won against terrific odds.

Later on he went with his friend and benefactor, Walter Hapworth, to Mexico and volun-

teered while there to go on a dangerous mission to a rebel stronghold in the mountains—so dangerous, in fact, that at one time a noose was tightening about his throat.

The longest sea flight the daring young aviator had yet attempted was accomplished when he flew without a stop from the Pacific Coast to Australia, his journey being enlivened by the fact that he had a madman in his plane. Experiences of a different kind came to him when he assisted the United States Secret Service in putting a stop to the smuggling of diamonds over the Canadian border.

How Ted, for a large wager, entered on an attempt to fly across the American continent from coast to coast in twenty hours, the perils he encountered from a gambling ring that stopped at nothing in its efforts to thwart the venture, the magnificent way in which he surmounted all obstacles and came out triumphant, are narrated in the preceding volume of this series, entitled: "Flying Against Time; or, Ted Scott Breaking the Ocean to Ocean Record."

Now to return to the scene in the blizzard as the young girl bending over Ted tossed aside the snow in the attempt to save his life.

In a few minutes, that seemed hours to her, she had his face and the upper part of his body uncovered. The aviator's eyes were closed,

his face was like marble, and she could not see that he breathed.

She put her hand over his heart and could feel a muffled beating. He lived then! She dragged him into a partly sitting position so that the body could lean back against the stump against which Ted's head had struck. Then she chafed his wrists and rubbed his arms and slapped his face in the effort to restore circulation.

She did this until her strength was exhausted, but whether she was succeeding or not she did not know. She must get help. Oh, if Jotham were there!

She stumbled to the plane and found a blanket. This she wrapped around Ted's head and shoulders as closely as she could and yet leave him room to breathe. Then she struggled to her feet and looked about her.

She felt weak and faint from the excitement and the exertion. Her head was reeling. But she must not give way. She *must* not!

From her present position she was nearer to the barn than she was to the house. It was probable that Jotham was there. She must get there at once.

Blinded, staggering, she plowed through the ever-deepening snow and at last reached the barn. The door was closed and she hammered on it desperately.

"Jotham! Jotham!" she called.

There was a hurried movement inside and the next moment the door swung open. A muscular, middle-aged man, with a strong, dependable face, looked at the girl in surprise.

"Why, Miss Grace, you, out in this storm!" he exclaimed, as he reached out and drew her into shelter.

"Jotham, come quickly," she panted. "You must help me. There's a man there, hurt, an aviator, in the snow. We must get him to the house. Get the sled and come along. Quick! Quick!"

CHAPTER III

A Close Call

At the girl's urgent plea Jotham sprang into action at once.

He rushed over to a corner of the barn where a long bobsled was standing against the wall. A stout hand rope was attached to it. He brought the sled to a level position, threw two horse blankets on it and drew it to the door.

"You get on this, Miss Grace, and cover yourself up and I'll draw you along," he said. "You're all tuckered out."

"No," replied Grace. "That will take you longer, and every minute is precious. I'll walk alongside of you. Only let's hurry. Oh, I hope he isn't dead!"

They hurried along as fast as they could through the drifts, bending their heads against the biting gale, and at last reached the spot where Ted Scott was lying unconscious. The robe still enveloped his head and shoulders, but the snow had drifted over it to the depth of a foot or more.

They hastily cleared this away and Jotham lifted Ted in his strong arms and deposited him on the long sled. Then he tucked the horse blankets around him carefully.

"He's got life in him yet," he said. "I could feel him move when I lifted him. You run along, Miss Grace, and ask your ma to get some hot water ready. I'll be there almost as soon as you are."

The girl obeyed the suggestion and Jotham followed more slowly because of the care he had to take to prevent the sled being overturned in the heavy drifts.

Mrs. Larue had been waiting anxiously at the window and she hurried to the door when she saw her daughter approaching.

"You don't know how glad I am that you're back, Grace!" she cried, as she drew the girl into the warm room. "I was awfully worried about you. I suppose you didn't find anything, after all."

"Oh, but I did," panted Grace, as she threw aside her wraps. "There was a man in a deep drift. He must have hit his head, for he was unconscious. I ran to the barn for Jotham and he's bringing him here on the sled. You get plenty of hot water and bandages and I'll go and get the bed ready in the spare room."

Mrs. Larue was taken aback by the news, but she wasted no time in further questioning. The

two women flew about on their various tasks and by the time Jotham arrived with his unconscious burden everything was in readiness.

The hired man lifted Ted from the sled and deposited him on a couch in the living room.

"Got to look at that head first," he said, taking direction of affairs. "There's an ugly gash there that needs dressing. Maybe the skull's fractured."

"Oh, I hope not!" exclaimed Mrs. Larue. "Poor fellow! A handsome boy, too!"

Grace brought warm water and Jotham, who in that section where doctors were scarce had learned a lot about broken heads and broken bones, carefully washed the wound and applied dressings.

"Just a scalp wound," he pronounced, "and like all scalp wounds it has bled a lot. But there's no fracture. And no other bones are broken, either," he added, as he ran his hands deftly over Ted's arms and legs.

"Now, is that spare bed ready?" continued Jotham. "Good! I'll take him in there, get these wet things off him, and put him between sheets. You folks can come when I call."

A few minutes later he summoned them. They found Ted tucked snugly under blankets, while Jotham stood regarding him with a sort of pride in a workmanlike job.

"Fine and dandy," he pronounced. "I first

rubbed him with snow so that he wouldn't get frostbite and then I got him warm and dry and snugged him in. It won't be long now before he gets back his senses. It was a pretty tough crack he got. But his heart's beating more strongly now and he'll soon be all right."

"Oh, I hope so!" exclaimed Grace. "But we ought to send right away for a doctor."

Jotham shook his head.

"Can't," he said. "I seen the telephone wires sagging and probably they're down by this time. Anyway, the doctor couldn't get here in this blizzard. But don't you worry, Miss Grace. That boy's an athlete. Splendid physique and body as hard as nails. Take an ax to kill him. By jinks, there he is opening his eyes now. P'r'aps you'd better have one of them hot drinks handy."

Ted's eyes were wide open now and he surveyed the group with a bewildered look.

"What—who—" he stammered and tried to lift himself, but Jotham gently pushed him back.

"You're all right, kid," he assured him. "Had a little accident and got pitched into the snow. Nothing to worry about."

Grace knelt by the side of the bed and presented the hot potion to Ted's lips, while she slipped her other arm beneath his head to support it.

"Drink this," she said. "It will make you feel better. Don't try to talk."

Ted obeyed meekly and Grace let his head down on the pillow.

"Now we're all going to get out," said Mrs. Larue, "but we'll be in every once in a while to see how you're getting on. You just go to sleep."

They left him then, leaving the door a trifle ajar so that they could hear the least sound that came from his room.

Ted Scott lay for a few minutes in a semi-conscious state. He tried to remember what had happened, but his reeling brain refused to function. All that he knew was that he was warm and snug after having been bitterly cold. He burrowed more deeply into his pillows and slept, slept so soundly that he was wholly unawares of the figures that from time to time tiptoed silently into the room, so soundly that the shrieking of the gale and the beating of sleet against his windows came to him not at all, so soundly that he hardly stirred throughout the night.

When he woke the next morning he looked about the room in surprise. It was a pleasant room, comfortably and tastefully furnished. The storm had ceased and the sunlight was pouring in. How had he come here?

He put his hand to his head and found that

it was bandaged. His head was sore when he touched it, but the ache had disappeared.

What had happened?

He cudgeled his brain in the effort to remember. Slowly it came back to him.

The blizzard! The knocking of the engine! The attempt to find a landing place! He had found it. The plane had run along, plowing through the drifts. Then it had struck something. He remembered hurtling through the air. And right there his memory stopped.

No, there was something else. Figures about him, a woman's arm supporting his head, a cup held to his lips—what else?

Nothing! But he was among friends and he was not seriously hurt. He kicked out his legs. He stretched his arms. No bones broken! A sense of exultation ran through him.

Through the open door came savory odors—fragrant coffee, sizzling bacon. Suddenly he felt ravenously hungry.

A light tap came at the door.

"Come in," he said.

Mrs. Larue stepped into the room. Her face was wreathed in smiles.

"So you can talk!" she exclaimed delightedly. "I'm so glad. How are you feeling this morning?"

"Fine, thank you, and full of gratitude to you for your goodness."

"Oh, it's my daughter Grace you have to thank," replied Mrs. Larue. "She went out in the storm and found you. Then she and the hired man brought you in."

"I can never thank her enough," said Ted earnestly. "She saved my life."

"Probably," was the smiling reply. "But we can talk about that later. Do you feel as though you could eat anything?"

"Anything?" replied Ted, smiling. "I can eat everything."

"Bless me, but that sounds good!" laughed his hostess. "I'm always sure there's nothing serious with men creatures when they can eat. Lie still there and I'll bring you up a tasty breakfast."

"Oh, you mustn't take that trouble," protested Ted. "I'll get up and come down. I don't want to make you any more work than is necessary. I've been nuisance enough already."

"What a way to put it!" exclaimed Mrs. Larue. "It's a pleasure to have you as our guest—or would be if you had come in some less dreadful manner. I'm more thankful than I can say that we've been able to do anything for you at all. I've been thinking all night what a dreadful thing it would have been if you had fallen miles away from any house. That could very easily have happened in this section

of the country, for there aren't many neighbors near us. But now about breakfast. You'd better let us bring it up to you. You must be feeling weak yet."

"Not at all," declared Ted. "I'm feeling fine and I wouldn't know that anything had happened to me if it weren't for this bandage on my head."

"All right then, if you insist," acceded his hostess. "Your clothes have a tear in them that I'm going to sew up, but I'll send Jotham up with a suit of my husband's. He's about your height, though of a heavier build, but I guess they'll fit you well enough."

She went out of the room and a few minutes later the hired man came in with the suit in question.

"I hear you're feeling pretty frisky this morning," Jotham said to Ted, with a broad grin on his pleasant, weather-beaten face. "I'm mighty glad to hear it. That was a pretty hard clout you got on that head of yours."

"Solid ivory," laughed Ted, as he got out of bed and commenced to dress. "I've had harder knocks than that and survived. But now give me the real facts about this accident of mine. I know I've fallen into mighty good hands, but I don't know just how I got here."

"It's all owing to Miss Grace," said Jotham, and went on to narrate the details of the matter.

"By George, she's a plucky girl!" ejaculated Ted fervently.

"That's what she is," agreed Jotham.

"I can never thank her enough," declared Ted. "Nor you, either, for what you did for me. But now I'm ready and can have a chance to thank the young lady in person."

Jotham led the way to the dining room, where, as he entered, Mrs. Larue and her daughter arose to receive their involuntary guest.

"This is my daughter, Grace," Mrs. Larue said. "Grace this is Mr.—Mr.—" She smiled. "I haven't asked your name, because of all the excitement."

"Scott is my name," replied Ted, with a smile, as he took the young girl's extended hand. "I find it hard to find words, Miss Larue, to thank you sufficiently for having saved my life. Jotham has told me all about it. It's the bravest thing I've ever heard of a girl doing and I shall never forget it as long as I live."

The girl blushed prettily.

"Oh, it was nothing," she replied. "Any one would have done the same under similar circumstances. I'm awfully glad that you got over your terrible experience so quickly. And now let's sit down to breakfast," she added, to forestall further thanks.

Ted thought that he had seldom, if ever, seen a lovelier face than that of his young rescuer as she sat opposite him at the table. Her hair was golden, her complexion perfect, and her eyes a deep violet, shaded by heavy curling lashes. Her voice, too, was full and sweet.

The conversation was bright and animated and both of the women were keenly interested in Ted's life as an aviator, its romance and its thrills.

"It must be wonderful," said Grace enthusiastically. "How often I've pictured to myself the man who flew like an eagle across the Atlantic, Ted Scott! He's my ideal of a hero. He—why, he has the same name as yours, the last name I mean!"

"That's not surprising," remarked Ted casually. "Scott isn't such an uncommon name."

Grace looked at him a little suspiciously.

"You haven't told us your first name," she remarked.

CHAPTER IV

The Jungle Explorers

At Grace Larue's remark the young aviator shifted a little uncomfortably in his seat.

"That's another coincidence," he said. "My first name happens to be Ted, too."

There was a dead silence. Ted, looking up, saw the women looking at him, wide-eyed.

"Funny, isn't it?" Ted said a little lamely.

Mrs. Larue put down her knife and fork.

"It is—it is!" she exclaimed excitedly. "Of course it is! Here I've been sitting wondering where I'd seen your face before! I've seen your picture a thousand times. It's that bandage, of course, that kept me from knowing you at once. Own up now, you're Ted Scott—*the* Ted Scott—the one that flew over the Atlantic and the Pacific."

Ted grinned sheepishly.

"Guilty," he admitted. "But don't hold it against me."

A perfect hubbub of questions and exclamations followed. Both women were highly

excited. They looked at him with something like worship. Grace remembered what she had just said about his being her ideal hero and her face flamed.

"To think," exclaimed Mrs. Larue in something of a flutter, "that I should have the honor of entertaining in my house one of the most famous young men in all the world, the man that America idolizes! How I bless the blizzard that brought it all about! This is a red-letter day in our lives. Oh, if my husband were only here to meet you, too! He'll never cease to regret not having met you."

Ted was red to the roots of his hair, for he was as modest as he was brave and never spoke of his exploits if he could avoid doing so.

He sought to turn the conversation to other topics, but they would not have it. They were avid for every detail and for politeness' sake and his gratitude for what they had done for him he could not refuse.

Breakfast was forgotten, the coffee grew cold, the food remained untasted, but the women did not care. This was a very great event of their lifetime and they were going to enjoy it to the full. Mrs. Larue did most of the talking, but the eyes of Grace were eloquent.

Nothing would do, too, but that Jotham should be called in, and his wonderment and delight were as great as their own. He—he,

Jotham—had helped save the life of the famous Ted Scott! A hired man, but many a millionaire would have envied him! At the village store his cronies would point to him with awe and he would be a big man in that community for the rest of his life.

"Now," said Ted, with a grin, when he had a brief breathing space, "I've told you the sad story of my life. Turn about is fair play. I ought to know something of the kind people who have saved my life. I infer from what you said, Mrs. Larue, that Mr. Larue is away?"

A shadow passed over the face of his hostess and that also of her daughter.

"Yes," was the reply, "he is on an exploring expedition in Brazil."

"Brazil?" echoed Ted. "That's a long way off." A thought struck him. "Is he Mr. Hamilton Larue, the famous archeologist?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Larue with a touch of pride in her voice. "Have you heard of him?"

"Who has not heard of him?" said Ted warmly. He is the greatest man in that line of science in America—in the world, for that matter."

"He'd be the last man in the world to admit that," replied his hostess, while both she and Grace flushed proudly at the warmth of the

tribute to their loved one. "He always says that the more he learns the more he knows that he doesn't know anything."

They laughed.

"That in itself is the sign of a really great man," said Ted. "What is he after on the present expedition?"

"Father is looking for an ancient city that is said to exist in the Brazilian wilds," put in Grace. "Of course, there are only ruins left now, but he thinks that by examining them he may find something that will be of great value to the scientific world."

"I have no doubt it will," said Ted. "Of course he has not gone there alone. I suppose that he has quite a large party with him?"

"Not many," replied Grace. "There are half a dozen white men in all. Father is the head of the expedition and his chief assistant is a college professor"—she hesitated a moment and flushed slightly—"Dayton Jarvis by name."

"A much younger man than my husband," put in Mrs. Larue. "Go and get your father's picture, Grace, and that of Dayton and show them to Mr. Scott. He might like to see them."

Grace left the room and returned in a moment with two photographs.

Ted examined them with interest. The portrait of Mr. Larue showed a man of stal-

wart physique with finely chiseled features, a determined mouth and piercing eyes—the face at once of an athlete and a scholar.

"I should know him at once as your father from your resemblance to him," Ted said to Grace. "And this," he added, as he looked at the other, "is the picture of Professor Dayton Jarvis?"

Grace nodded.

"A fine fellow," Ted commented. "Just the kind I would like to have at my back in case of a scrap."

Mrs. Larue beamed and Grace flushed happily.

"My husband says he's one of the most brilliant young men he has ever met," said his hostess. "He thinks he will go far in his profession. He's very fond of him."

Ted caught a look in Grace's eyes that told him someone else besides Mr. Larue was very fond of Dayton Jarvis.

"He's a lucky dog," said Ted to himself.

"I suppose you hear frequently from Mr. Larue?" he said to his hostess.

A worried look came into her face.

"Not nearly so frequently as we should like," she replied. "He writes just as often as he gets an opportunity, but the letters have to be carried to the coast by natives and they frequently miscarry. I suppose sometimes the

poor fellows are killed in the jungle. It's a dreadful country, Mr. Scott—wild beasts, anacondas, alligators, and all kinds of horrible things. Sometimes I have the most awful nightmares, wondering what may be happening out there."

"Don't get to worrying," counseled Ted. "I know from reading your husband's books that he has been in many wild sections of the world and come back safe."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Larue. "But you know the old saying about the pitcher that goes to the well too often. It gets broken at last. I wish he'd give up exploring and stay at home. Talk about golf widows! I'm an explorer's widow."

"Not so bad as that," laughed Ted. "I suppose, of course, the party is well armed?"

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "My husband always sees to that. He's a dead shot."

"And so is Dayton—Mr. Jarvis, I mean," said Grace.

"But there are so many things in the jungle that powder and shot can't keep off," went on Mrs. Larue, "fevers, floods, falling trees, earthquakes, and the like. Have you ever been down in that part of the world, Mr. Scott?"

"No," replied Ted. "But I've often thought I'd like to go. I may some day."

He glanced out of the window.

"Just at present," he went on, "I'd better think about getting to Denver."

There were instant protests from both the women.

"Hear the man!" exclaimed Mrs. Larue. "Just got out of a sick bed, after getting a blow on the head that would have killed most men, and he's talking about going to Denver! Please stay a little longer."

"Is your business in Denver so very important?" asked Grace softly.

"Not important to me, but very important to a dear friend of mine," replied Ted. "He's done more for me than anyone on earth, outside of my own family, and I don't want to fall down on him. He has large business interests and this is a big deal that he wants me to close up for him. Believe me, I'd like to stay if I could. You've done so much for me that I hate to tear myself away from this delightful home and you delightful people."

"I don't see how you can go to-day, anyway," said Mrs. Larue hopefully. "This is the heaviest snowfall we've had this winter. Your plane must be nearly buried in the drifts."

"I suppose it is," said Ted ruefully. "I'll have to see to it right away. I don't suppose I really can go to-day, but I can get the machine in shape so as to start the first thing to-

morrow morning. I'll have to make a runway, too. So I'd better get started right away."

"Jotham will help you," said Mrs. Larue, "and he'll get all the neighbors to give a hand."

"It's hardly fair to give them so much trouble," protested Ted.

"Trouble!" Mrs. Larue laughed. "Why, they'll come running, every man jack of them within ten miles. They'd work their fingers to the bone for Ted Scott and boast of the honor for all the rest of their lives. I'll get Jotham for you right away. Suppose, Grace, you take up the telephone and see whether it's working. Jotham thought the wires would be down, but maybe he was mistaken. If you find it's all right, call up as many of the neighbors as you can think of and ask them to come over and help Mr. Scott make his runway."

Grace did as requested and found that the phone was working. Immediately she set about complying with her mother's directions. The news created great excitement and ran through the little community like a prairie fire. There was no question about getting enough volunteers. Every man who was not a cripple or sick in bed was wild to come and help.

In the meantime, Jotham had been summoned and he and Ted went out together to

the plane while the women got busy making sandwiches and preparing coffee for the influx of visitors.

As Mrs. Larue had predicted, the plane was found to be nearly covered with snow. It took some time for Ted and Jotham to clear it of the impeding drifts. But they succeeded at last and then Ted set to work on the repairs.

These externally did not amount to much. A wheel had been knocked out of line from the collision with the rock and one of the wings had been scraped. These things were easily attended to.

What Ted was more concerned with was the trouble with the engine. He was as good a mechanic as he was an airman, and soon found the cause of the knock. It was a minor trouble, and Ted adjusted it so that he knew he would have no more trouble from that source before he reached Denver.

By early afternoon the volunteer helpers had all arrived, most of them equipped with shovels, as Grace had requested. They gazed on Ted with awe and admiration and crowded forward to shake hands with the famous young aviator, whose name was a household word with them but whom none of them had ever expected to see in person. Then they set to work under his directions.

Many hands make light work, especially such

muscular and vigorous hands as those that wielded the shovels, and in a few hours the little army had cleared a broad path many hundred yards in length that Ted's practiced eye told him would be quite sufficient for the take-off.

By the time they had finished it was quite dark, and after the refreshments that Mrs. Larue and Grace insisted on their taking, the company reluctantly dispersed, after Ted had thanked them in the warmest terms for their help.

The evening was spent in quiet chat and all retired early, for Ted's plan was to start at the earliest touch of dawn.

But early as it was when he rose, his hostesses had preceded him and a tempting breakfast awaited him when he came into the dining room.

"I suppose it's no use asking you to stay longer," said Mrs. Larue wistfully, as they rose from the table after the meal was finished. "But I should be so glad to have you stay weeks and weeks! Wouldn't we, Grace?"

"Indeed we would," said Grace earnestly.

"It's awfully good of you to say so," responded Ted warmly. "Nothing would suit me better if I could. I shall always remember this as one of the pleasantest experiences of my life. And I shall never forget what you have

done for me. I owe my life to you. I only wish there were some way in which I could reciprocate. If I can ever be of the slightest service to you, don't fail to call on me. I'd come to you from the very ends of the earth."

The women and Jotham went out with him under the rosy sunlight glow that colored the snow to the place where the plane was standing, quivering like a living thing as though it were eager to be off.

Ted put the last touch to his equipment and shook hands with them all.

"Good-by," he said, "and once more a thousand thanks."

His voice shook a trifle and there was a suspicious moisture in the eyes of Grace and her mother, for they had become wonderfully attracted to him during their short acquaintance.

Ted jumped into the cockpit, the motors roared, and the plane started down the improvised runway. A few hundred yards, and it left the gronnd and darted up into the sky.

CHAPTER V

On the Wing

Below him as he shot upward, Ted Scott could see the little group waving to him with their handkerchiefs. He waved back and then, as a parting compliment to his hosts, gave them an exhibition of flying that made them gasp.

He banked and side-slipped, looped the loop several times, and capped the climax by flying upside down. Then after perhaps ten minutes of this "fireworks" he brought his plane to a level keel and with a parting wave of his hand set out for Denver.

He had the wild exhilaration he always felt when he found himself in the upper spaces. The air was his element. Who would walk when he could fly? Up where he was a man could breathe, not the smoky, soiled air of the earth, but that of the clean, pure skies. His nostrils dilated. His soul expanded. He felt that he was brother to the sun and moon and stars.

Then as the first exultation subsided his

thoughts took a more sober turn. He reflected on how near he had come to a fate that would have precluded any further soaring in that sweet upper air. And from that fate he had been saved by the hands of a girl whose brave heart had bade her seek for him among the drifts.

By Jove, she was plucky. And pretty, too—as pretty as a picture. Too pretty perhaps for his peace of mind, had he stayed a little longer. But there—Dayton Jarvis! Gee, that Jarvis was in luck! Any fellow would be in luck to inspire the look that was in the violet eyes of Grace Larue when they had fixed upon the young explorer's picture.

Still, perhaps Grace was lucky, too. For that young Jarvis was certainly a fine specimen of manhood. Ted knew a man when he saw him, and Jarvis was a man. A fellew had to have grit to explore those dangerous jungles where death lay in wait at every step, where venomous serpents lurked in the grass, where boa constrictors peered with their wicked eyes through the branches of trees and were ready to fall upon luckless travelers and crush them in their folds, where jaguars and pumas stalked their prey by day and night, where alligators with their rows of sawlike teeth infested the streams, and where human enemies quite as ferocious as the wild beasts might at any time be en-

countered. Yes, Jarvis was a man! And for Grace's sake, Ted could find it in his heart to be unselfishly glad.

But he soon put aside these thoughts, for he was approaching the Rockies, and in that mountainous region an airman who valued his life must think of nothing but his plane. There were jagged peaks to be cleared. There were the treacherous air pockets in the gorges that, like the clutching hands of vampires, had drawn many an aviator down to his death. There, more than at any other place on the continent, it was true that eternal vigilance was the price of safety.

He mounted steadily until at last he was flying at a height of ten thousand feet, a greater height than he cared for because of the difficulty of breathing the rarefied air. But even this height would have to be increased to give him a sufficient margin of safety when he should reach the higher parts of the range.

Now the region began to assume a familiar look. The peaks and gorges had the appearance of old acquaintances. For he was in the district covered by the Rocky Mountain Air Mail Division, where he had accomplished some of his most daring feats and experienced some of his greatest thrills.

Before him loomed the highest peaks that he had yet encountered, towering in silent

majesty toward the sky. He pulled the stick and the plane shot upward until he was a thousand feet above the highest summit. There he hovered in the immense void, a mere speck in the ether, an atom in the universe, with the snow-clad peaks beneath and the sapphire sky above. The roar of his engine alone broke the great silences.

Once before had he been nearer the skies—the time he had broken the world's altitude record by soaring to a height of forty-seven thousand feet, the time his engine burst and only his unflinching nerve and superb airmanship had brought him back in safety to the earth.

He hoped devoutly that that same thing would not happen now. One such experience was enough for a lifetime. But the engine was working beautifully and carrying the plane along at a rate that promised to bring him to his destination before noon, he told himself after a glance at his instruments.

The promise was fulfilled, for the sun had not yet reached its zenith when he caught sight of the spires and towers of Denver lifting themselves into the air. He put on an additional burst of speed and was soon hovering over the airport on the outskirts of this great western city.

He spiraled about in ever-lowering circles

and came down to a landing that would scarcely have broken a pane of glass.

The coming of Ted Scott was always an event, and although his visit had not been heralded, sharp eyes had noted the markings on his plane and there was a rush for him by the pilots and mechanics on the field as soon as he had stopped his machine.

He jumped out of the cockpit, to be pounded and mauled and have his hand almost shaken off by his delighted friends, foremost among whom were his special friends, Bill Twombley, Ed Allenby and Roy Benedict.

"If this isn't a sight for sore eyes!" roared Bill, as he threw his arms about Ted in a bear's hug.

"I found a quarter this morning, so I knew it was going to be a lucky day, but I had no idea of such luck as this," laughed Ed Allenby, who had been Ted's associate on the record-breaking trip to Australia.

"Why in thunder didn't you let us know that you were coming?" asked Roy. "The whole city would have been out to meet you with bands and parades 'n' everything."

"I've had enough of 'bands and parades 'n' everything' to last me for a long while," replied Ted, grinning, his heart warmed by the uproarious welcome. "Just to see you fellows is all I want."

"Well, now we've got you we're not going to let you go for a while," declared Bill. "We were just getting ready to knock off for lunch. Come right over to our quarters and have chow and a chinfest."

"Chow sounds good to me," replied Ted, "for I'm as hungry as a wolf. As for the chinfest, though, we'll have to put most of that off until to-night. I've come on a business errand and I've had a little mishap on the way that has made me late as it is. So I'll have to eat and run."

It was a jovial and happy party that sat down to a substantial lunch. It was something to have such friends, Ted Scott thought to himself, as he looked at the smiling faces, bronzed from exposure to wind and sun in their work as pilots in the Air Mail Service. Tried and true comrades they were, ever ready for a fight or a frolic, tested in one of the most hazardous occupations known to men. All of them had faced death many times, sometimes alone, sometimes together, and there was not one of them who would not have risked his life for any of the others.

They had much to say, and as most of them tried to say it at the same time there was anything but a dead calm at the table. All too soon Ted had to tear himself away and repair to the hotel, where he had engaged a room in advance.

There he found telegrams awaiting him, three of them from Walter Hapworth, each later one more worried in tone than the preceding. Ted had promised to wire his friend as soon as he reached Denver, and the fact that he had not done so had made Mr. Hapworth more and more convinced that the young aviator must have met with an accident, perhaps a serious or a fatal one.

Ted set his friend's mind to rest at once by wiring of his safe arrival at Denver, with the promise of a more detailed message later on. He also sent a telegram of reassurance to Eben and Charity Browning at Bromville. Then, after a bath, a shave, and a change of clothes, he sought out the head of the corporation with which Mr. Hapworth's deal was pending.

The languid office boy was galvanized into action when Ted gave him his name to be taken in to the head of the firm, and there was a general stoppage of all business when the rumor spread like wildfire that the famous Ted Scott was in the building. Even though word was sent out instantly from the inner office that he was to be ushered in, Ted almost had to fight his way through the crowd of clerks, stenographers, and minor officials who crowded about him.

A reception equally cordial, though not so demonstrative, awaited him in the inner office,

where the president and the leading executives of the corporation greeted him. In fact, it was hard to get down to business in the tumult of conversation that ensued.

Get down to it at last Ted did, however, and the clear and masterful way in which he stated his case carried the day. It was with the momentous contract signed, sealed, and in his pocket that Ted finally left the office, to have again to run the gauntlet of his admirers.

He sent a jubilant telegram to Mr. Hapworth announcing his success and then spent a delightful evening with his aviator chums, retiring, however, at a reasonable hour, for he had planned to start on his return journey the following morning. Work awaited him in Bromville that brooked no further delay, and as the health of Charity, his foster-mother, was none of the best, he was anxious to be with her as soon as possible.

It was with a light heart that, after a tumultuous send-off from the friends who had gathered to wish him good-by and good luck, he turned the nose of his plane toward the East. He had succeeded in his mission, the wound on his head had practically healed, and he felt that all was for the best in the best of possible worlds.

The sun was shining brightly when he started and the weather continued fine until

after he had passed the Rockies. Then a haze obscured the sun and sent a spectral gloom through the air. Still, visibility continued to be fairly good, and as long as the haze did not deepen into fog—that most dangerous hazard of the airman—Ted was content.

He had promised the Larues that on his return trip he would, wind and weather permitting, so shape his journey as again to pass over their ranch.

This he did, and was delighted as he approached to note that the roar of his plane had been heard and that the two women, with Jotham, were standing in front of the house, looking skyward and waving their handkerchiefs.

Ted leaned far out and waved in return. Then he dropped over the side three black boxes that could be plainly seen by the trio as they fell into the soft snowdrifts.

That they did see them was evident from the way they started forward, all three at once. Ted did not wait to see them open them.

He knew what they would find when they lifted the lids of the boxes.

CHAPTER VI

The Wrath of the Storm

Ted Scott could see the contents of those boxes as plainly now as though they were spread before him, for he had selected them with great care the afternoon before in the store of the leading jeweler of Denver.

The box designed for Mrs. Larue contained a dainty platinum and sapphire pin, that for Grace a bracelet, that for Jotham a watch, carefully packed. All of them were as costly as was consistent with good taste under the special circumstances, and each had engraved on it: "With eternal gratitude: Ted Scott."

He could never pay his debt to them. These gifts were not intended as payment. They were simply grateful recognitions of the great service that had been rendered him by these warm-hearted people.

The afternoon was well advanced by this time, and Ted accelerated the pace of the gallant plane until it was flying but little short of its utmost speed. He knew that he could not

get home until midnight or early the next morning, but he had no intention of stopping anywhere for the night.

The air field at Bromville was well lighted at night, and even had it not been, Ted was so familiar with every foot of it that he would have had no difficulty in making a landing.

As for night flying, he had become thoroughly used to that, for many of his trips in the Air Service had covered dusk-to-dawn routes, so that though he preferred the daytime, it really made very little difference when he had an object to be achieved.

What did make him a little uneasy was the threatening appearance of the weather. The sky was of an ominous steel gray that forebode wind and plenty of it.

Dark came on, a dark unlighted by moon or stars, and Ted was forced to rely more and more upon his instruments. At times a glow that suffused the sky told him that he was passing over a city, but of the land beneath he could see nothing.

Then suddenly, without the preliminary warning of spasmodic gusts, the gale struck—struck with such savage and tremendous force that the plane turned completely upside down!

Ted's body was thrown so heavily against his straps that for a moment he feared that they would give way. But they held, and by

herculean efforts the young aviator brought the plane to an even keel.

He found himself in a maelstrom of the elements. Had the wind been steady from a given quarter, he could have tacked against it or fled before it. But it seemed to be coming from all directions at once and the plane was tossed about like a chip on the bosom of a torrent. Ted thought for a moment that he had been caught in a cyclone. Then he remembered that those scourges came only or chiefly in hot weather.

But the name by which it might be called was indifferent. It was a furious storm, one of the fiercest that Ted had ever encountered, and brought to him a fleeting remembrance of the West Indian hurricane that had once entrapped him.

Many an aviator in such a storm would have lost his head and been dashed to earth with his plane. But Ted Scott was never cooler than in an emergency. It called into play every resource that he possessed.

Now, with steady eye and hand and nerves like steel, he rose to the occasion and played his lone hand against the elements. The wind tore about and through the plane with the screaming as of a myriad demon. All its rage was unleashed, as though to crush this presumptuous mortal that dared to defy it.

At times it reared up beneath the plane as though to upset it, much as a monster whale rises beneath the boat of its pursuers. At others it bore down from above as though it would crush the frail structure to the earth.

But through all the welter Ted kept his head and handled the plane superbly. At times he shot upward, seeking for a quieter stratum, and not finding it there dived for the lower reaches. But high or low seemed to make no difference, and he settled down to a prolonged battle, trying to sense what next his opponent was going to do and then seeking to steer his plane accordingly.

For hours he rode the storm, and though he never knew what minute might be his last, he never despaired. At last the gale abated. Its roar sank to baffled grunts and then to weary sighs. It had done its best to conquer the daring airman and had failed. Ted and his plane had come through.

Not wholly unscathed had they come through, however, for there was a slight drooping of the left wing that showed it had been strained in the conflict. Ted judged that the strain was not serious, but nevertheless he was under the necessity of abating speed and nursing the plane along. He could no longer carry on with the speed at which he had started on his journey.

He was far too relieved at finding himself alive to worry much about a minor incident. He sank back in his seat, tired to the bone with the terrific struggle he had waged. He was dripping with sweat from his tremendous exertions. But he had won through and his heart was singing with triumph.

Hot coffee and sandwiches refreshed him somewhat, and he was further soothed by the beauty of the night, for the clouds had shredded away, the stars were peeping out, and before long the moon arose and flooded the world with glory.

He had plenty of time to enjoy it, for at the comparatively slow pace that he was compelled to maintain it was nearly dawn when at last he reached Bromville. It was too early for many to be astir and the air field was deserted. But the sun had fully risen by the time he had landed and stored the plane in its hangar and made his way home.

Early as it was, Eben and Charity Browning were up and dressed and waiting for him, and the loving welcome he received made amends for all the strain and anxiety of the night.

"Land's sakes!" exclaimed Charity, after she had hugged and kissed him to her heart's content, "how did you come to have that big scar on your head, Ted?"

"Oh, just a little mix-up on the way," re-

plied Ted carelessly. "Got pitched out in the snow while trying to make a landing in a blizzard and hit my head on a rock."

"Mercy me!" exclaimed Charity, clasping her hands, "you might have been killed."

"Might but wasn't, Mother," replied Ted, fondly patting her face. "I'm feeling like a two-year-old."

"Dear me!" murmured Charity. "I do wish you'd give up flying, Ted. Seems to me like going in the face of Providence. If the good Lord had meant men to fly he'd have given them wings instead of legs. I'm always worrying about you while you're on the wing. But come right in now and get breakfast. I had a feeling you'd get here early and I've got things all ready for you."

It was indeed a most toothsome meal that the young aviator's foster mother had prepared with her own hands, and Ted did full justice to it.

"How have things been going since I left?" asked Ted during one of the pauses.

"Fine," replied Eben, his rubicund face glowing with satisfaction. "Trade is good and picking up all the while. Have to get more help if this keeps up. Everything seems better in Broomville now that we've got rid of the Gale family."

"I can readily believe that," replied Ted.

"The air of the town must be cleaner since those reprobates are in jail."

The Gales, by whom Eben meant the former proprietor of the Hotel Excelsior, the most palatial caravansary of the town, and his two graceless sons, had indeed been thorns in the side of Eben Browning for many years.

The trio, however, had now been laid by the heels and all were serving terms in prison, and the whole town breathed more freely, for the rascals, despite the wealth of the father, had been a menace to the community.

Following breakfast, Ted repaired to his room where he had the long sleep that he so sorely needed after his fight with the storm the night before. He did not wake till late afternoon, and then he hunted up Walter Hapworth and narrated to him the details of his mission.

Hapworth was delighted with his success and thanked him heartily.

"All to the good, Ted," he declared. "If you ever cared to go into that sort of business, you'd make a first-class financier."

"Nothing doing," replied Ted, with a grin. "Flying is good enough for me."

"Too bad you had that accident on the way," remarked Walter. "The whole nation would have gone into mourning if it had ended fatally."

"There was one compensation," said Ted.

"It introduced me into one of the pleasantest households I have ever known."

"I fancy the fair Grace didn't make it any the less pleasant," insinuated Walter slyly.

"Quit your kidding," adjured Ted, with a grin. "I'm still heart whole and fancy free. Besides, the girl is already head over heels in love with another fellow, and I wouldn't butt in. All the same, she's the real thing."

The next day about noon Ted Scott strolled over to the flying field, which was owned by the Devally-Hipson Aero Corporation and adjoined their factory buildings. He chose the time because he was desirous of seeing some of his old friends at the works. Then, too, he was anxious to look over his plane and fix the slightly injured wing.

He was engaged absorbedly on this when the whistle blew and the employees of the factory came trooping out.

Ted was always a magnet in his native town, as elsewhere. His exploits had made Bromville known to the world and the people of the place were intensely proud of him.

Foremost among those that greeted him were Mark Lawson, Jack Forrest, and Breck Lewis.

"It is sure good to see you again, Ted," said Mark, as he clapped Ted on the shoulder.

"Ted, like Satan, has been wandering up and

down the earth and going to and fro therein," declared Breck Lewis.

"Haven't seen you for a dog's age," put in Jack Forrest.

"I might say the same thing of you fellows," replied Ted. "It must be weeks and weeks since we've had a chinfest. Of course I've been away from town for a long time. How's everything going with you boys?"

The young men looked at each other.

"You tell him, Jack," said Mark.

"No, you tell him," responded Jack.

"Why the air of mystery?" queried Ted. "What's the deep dark secret?"

"Promise not to laugh?" asked Mark.

"I'll be sober as an undertaker," replied Ted, wondering what was coming.

"Well then, prepare yourself for a shock," and Mark grinned a bit sheepishly. "We—Jack and I—have been away to a flying school."

"What?" exclaimed Ted.

"Sure as shooting," declared Jack. "We don't look like much, but we're honest to goodness full-fledged aviators."

"Great!" cried Ted, his face shining with pleasure as he grasped a hand of each. "That's the best news I've heard for a long time. Congratulations."

"All your fault, Ted," laughed Mark. "Your example has been too much for us. Of

course we'll never be in your class; but such as we are we're in among the flyers."

"Breck is going later on," said Jack. "He couldn't arrange to go at the same time we did, but he counts on taking it up next year."

"Better and better!" cried Ted. "It's the only life, boys. I wouldn't exchange my seat in the cockpit for the throne of a king. We four will have mighty good times together. But now that you've got your licenses what do you plan to do with them?"

"We've thought some of going into the Air Mail Service, if we can get jobs there," replied Mark.

"There's no better training in the world than you can get there," said Ted.

"But for the present," stated Jack, "we expect to stay right here at the works until we get a little more experience. We've been promised chances to test the planes as the plant turns them out. That'll give us an opportunity to get familiar with every type of plane from a baby wasp to an army bomber."

"How long are you going to stay in town this time, Ted?" asked Mark.

"Oh, for some weeks, anyway," was the reply. "I've got to finish some material that I'm going to add to a new edition of my book."

"But of course you'll do a good deal of

flying about the old place," remarked Jack.

"You bet I will," replied Ted. "There won't be a day that I shan't go up for an hour or two. That day is wasted that sees me on the ground. Say," he added, as a thought struck him, "what's the matter with you boys taking turns in going up with me? It would be company and I'd like nothing better."

"Will we? Will a duck swim?" cried Mark, and Jack nodded vigorous approval. "That was just what we wanted to do, but we hardly had the nerve to ask you," went on Mark. "Gee, what points we can pick up about flying! How about it, Jack?" and he nudged his companion.

"Can't we!" echoed Jack enthusiastically. "It isn't everybody who gets the chance to learn from Ted Scott, the greatest airman in the world."

"Cut out the salve," laughed Ted. "All right, fellows, that will be fine. Toss a coin to see who goes up first and after that take turns. We'll have a spin this very afternoon."

Mark Lawson won the toss and got the first chance. The next day Jack took his turn and the progress they made under Ted's tutelage was amazing. They were both well qualified for the work and had the airman's instinct, so that Ted's teaching did not fall on barren ground. They had an opportunity to test their

skill under all conditions of wind and weather and they did so well that Ted was justly proud of his pupils.

Three weeks passed in this fashion and the winter was giving way to spring, when one day Ted received a telegram. He thought at first it was on some business matter and tore it open listlessly. But when his eyes fell on the message he sat up in his chair with a jerk.

For the telegram read:

MY FATHER AND OTHERS MISSING WILL YOU HELP ME FIND THEM

GRACE LARUE

CHAPTER VII

A Dangerous Mission

Walter Hapworth was sitting on the porch of the Bromville House at the time Ted Scott received the telegram. He saw his friend start up in agitation and looked at him curiously.

"None of my business," he remarked, "but you seem to be upset. No bad news, I hope?"

Ted handed him the message.

"Read that," he said.

Walter read and reread. Then he gave vent to a prolonged whistle.

"Too bad!" he exclaimed. "This is from the girl you met at the time of the blizzard, I suppose."

"Yes. Just now, as you see from the heading, she's at a hotel in Chicago."

"Missing," Hapworth read from the telegram. "What do you suppose that means?"

"It may mean many things," replied Ted. "They may be captured. They may be dead. Poor girl! She must be in terrible distress.

She was enormously proud and fond of that father of hers."

"And of someone else in the party, judging from what you've told me," remarked Walter.

"Yes, Dayton Jarvis," agreed Ted. "He's probably met whatever fate her father has."

"What are you going to do?" asked Walter, eying his friend intently.

"Do? Whatever she wants me to, of course. I told her when I was at her home that if she wanted me I'd come to her from the ends of the earth. Excuse me just a minute while I phone a message to the telegraph office."

He went inside, took up the phone and ordered sent the following telegram:

WILL DO ANYTHING I CAN FOR THE GIRL WHO SAVED MY LIFE COUNT ON ME DEEPEST SYMPATHY WHERE SHALL I MEET YOU WILL COME TO CHICAGO IF YOU WISH WIRE ME

He repeated the message twice to make sure that the operator had it correctly and then rejoined his friend on the porch.

"Brazil!" murmured Hapworth meditatively. "A long way off and an immense country, as big or bigger than the United States. Looking for missing men would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

"Something like that," admitted Ted. "Of

course, it all depends on what clews I have to follow. They may be definite enough to confine the search to a comparatively small part of the country."

"That's true enough. But admit that you find the missing men. If they're simply lost in the jungle, that's one thing. If they're captives in the hands of savages, that would be quite another thing. How would you get them out of that plight?"

"That would be up to me to find out when I was on the spot," replied Ted. "I'll know better what I'm up against when I've had a talk with Miss Larue. She knows, of course, a lot that she couldn't put into a telegram."

"Let that pass, then," went on Hapworth. "But if you should go to Brazil, how would you go? By steamer or by plane? But I can already see the answer in your eye."

"By plane, of course," replied Ted. "I could cover fifty times more territory in a day by plane that I could on foot."

"To be sure you could," assented Hapworth. "It would be all right, if you were up in the sky. But how about getting to the ground if you wanted to make a landing? I understand that most of the Brazilian wild is an almost impenetrable mass of trees and brush. It would be next to impossible to come down."

"That's the common impression," replied

Ted. "But Miss Larue told me a lot that she had learned from her father's letters about Brazil. She says that there are vast plateaus and stretches of prairie land interspersed in the tangle of woodland. I'd simply have to circle around until I found such a spot for landing. But there's no use crossing bridges before you come to them. I'd have to act according to conditions as I found them. But if the difficulties were ten times as bad as they seem to be, I'd go just the same."

They were still discussing the matter absorbedly when a messenger boy came with a second telegram.

Ted opened it eagerly and saw that it was in answer to his own. The message read:

A THOUSAND THANKS I WAS SURE YOU WOULD HELP ME AM LEAVING FOR BROMVILLE TO-NIGHT WILL REACH THERE AT NINE O'CLOCK TO-MORROW MORNING

"Coming here!" exclaimed Hapworth, as Ted turned the telegram over to him. "Good! Now you'll have the whole story. Then you'll know just what you've got to do."

It was necessary now for Ted to acquaint Eben and Charity with the facts, and he did so, glossing over as much as he could any suggestion of special danger connected with the fulfilling of his promise.

They listened with all their ears, intensely interested and sympathetic and at the same time profoundly apprehensive of the danger involved for their foster son.

"That dreadful country where there are alligators and snakes and wild beasts and savages," wailed Charity. "Oh, Ted, I'm afraid. I'm dreadfully afraid!"

"Come, come now, Mother," Ted said to her, patting her hand soothingly. "I've been in countries where there were all those things, and I'm still a pretty healthy specimen. Don't worry at all. Everything will be all right. And think of that poor girl eating her heart out with fear and misery. Don't forget that if it hadn't been for her, I wouldn't be here to-day."

"The poor lamb!" murmured Charity, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron. "My heart bleeds for her. But, oh, I wish this thing hadn't happened!"

"So do I," replied Ted. "But since it has, there's only one thing I can do. And remember, Mother, things may not be so bad as we think. She may hear at any time that the party has been found and then I may not have to go at all."

Ted returned to the veranda of the hotel and found Walter Hapworth in a brown study.

"A penny for your thoughts," chaffed the young aviator.

"I don't know that they're worth that much," replied his friend. "I guess the spring is getting into my blood."

"Feeling restless and listening for the call of adventure?" asked Ted.

"You might put it that way. I've been tied pretty closely to business all winter and I feel the need of a change. While you were inside I was thinking of the gorgeous time we had together when we made that hop over the Pacific. That was a great experience! That was living, I'll say!"

"It sure was," agreed Ted. "We couldn't complain of not having plenty of thrills. I can see the way you're tending, you old rascal!" he exclaimed. "You're making up your mind to go with me to Brazil."

Hapworth smiled a little sheepishly.

"You're something of a mind reader, old boy," he admitted. "To tell the truth, I was thinking of that very thing. That is, if you want me to."

Ted Scott jumped from his chair.

"Want you to!" he shouted. "You bet your life I want you to! That would solve half my problem at the very start. Jove, to have you at my back in a pinch! But really, Walter,"

he went on in a soberer tone, "it's asking too much of you. As to me, I've got to go because of what I owe to Grace Larue. But you're under no such obligation. And remember that you might be going to your death."

"I know all that," replied Hapworth. "If I had a wife and kids, I probably wouldn't feel justified in going. But my life is fully my own to do with as I choose, and if I should chance to lose it, I couldn't lose it in a better cause. So that's settled. If you go, I'll go with you."

"Jove, Walter, you're a brick!" exclaimed Ted, as he wrung his friend's hand. "You're the real goods, the best friend a man ever had, believe me!"

Ted Scott worked at feverish haste for the rest of that day to finish the work he had on hand, and the next morning hastened to the train.

He scanned the passengers as they alighted until he saw a young girl whose figure seemed familiar and hastened toward her.

He was not mistaken. It was Grace Larue.

CHAPTER VIII

Lost in the Wilds

Grace Larue smiled and extended her hand, which Ted Scott grasped warmly, while with the other he took her suitcase.

"I was on the watch for you," he said, with a smile.

"Yes," she said. "How good you are! I cant't tell you how my heart leaped when I received your telegram. I was all alone in Chicago and feeling so forlorn and helpless. In my extremity I turned to you, though I had no right to do so."

"The best right in the world," declared Ted. "I owe my life to you and anything I can do will be but a poor return."

He hailed a cab and helped her in and they were whirled to the Bromville House where Charity awaited them. Before Ted could even introduce the girl Charity had folded her to her motherly bosom.

"You poor, dear lamb!" she said, and there was so much sympathy and tenderness in her

tone that the girl burst into tears and hid her head on her shoulder.

"There, there," soothed Charity. "Have your cry out. It will do you good. Ted has told me all about how you saved his life and I love you for that. And don't you worry about your folks. The good Lord will take care of them. Now you come right up with me to your room and afterwards you can tell us all about it."

They disappeared together up the stairs, and Ted, strongly moved, strolled restlessly up and down the veranda.

In a little while they came down again. Grace had refreshed herself after her journey and changed her dress and although there were signs of strain under her violet eyes Ted thought that she looked lovelier than ever.

Eben had joined the group and welcomed Grace warmly and the four went into the cozy little private sitting room. Their number was augmented a moment later, for Ted, glancing through the window, saw Walter Hapworth coming up the steps of the porch.

"Do you mind, Miss Larue, if I bring a very dear friend of mine into this conference?" he asked. "He has already volunteered to go with me if I should go to Brazil, and his advice and assistance may be of very great service to both you and me."

"Certainly," assented Grace. "I shall be very glad to meet him."

Ted went out and, after greeting Walter, brought him in and introduced him.

"I am delighted to meet you, Miss Larue," said Hapworth. "Ted Scott has never tired of telling me about your bravery. And as Ted is my closest friend, I thank you, too."

"I'm afraid Mr. Scott has made too much of the slight service I had the good fortune to render him," said Grace. "But I owe you many thanks, too, for he has told me that you have offered to help him in the search for my father."

Her voice broke a little at that point but she regained her self-control.

"Now, suppose, Miss Larue, you tell us in your own way just what has happened," said Ted. "We may have to interrupt with questions sometimes, but it won't be often."

"Mother and I had already been worried a good deal because of the absence of letters from my father," began Grace; "but we kept telling ourselves that this was probably because of some accident to the native carriers who were intrusted with the work of carrying the letters to the coast. We knew from experience that that sometimes happened.

"But after a while our anxiety grew so great that Mother communicated with the families of

some others of the party. She learned that their customary letters also had ceased to come. As time went on it seemed more and more likely that something serious had happened to the expedition.

"In the meantime, I had had to go to Chicago to attend to some business with the publishers of Father's books. It was while I was there that I got a letter from my mother—a letter so distracted and tear-stained that I could hardly make it out.

"She said that she had received a letter from Professor Bromley, one of the members of the party. He said that the whole party had been captured by natives at a place called Jaguar Trail and carried off over a jungle trail farther into the wilderness. Professor Bromley and one other had managed to make their escape and had found their way after great privations to a Brazilian village somewhere near the coast. Professor Bromley said that he was going to try to get the Brazilian Government to send out a searching party, but he intimated that the authorities moved very slowly in that matter when they moved at all and he had little hope that anything would come of it. That was about all there was in the letter, but it nearly broke my heart." Her lip quivered and her eyes were suffused with tears.

"Poor child!" murmured Charity.

"Your mother didn't send you the actual letter of Professor Bromley, did she?" asked Ted gently.

"No," replied Grace.

"I wish she had," said Ted. "There might be some things in it that she had looked upon as unimportant and yet which might be of real value to us. The place from which Professor Bromley was writing, for instance."

"Oh, she did tell me that!" said Grace. "It was a place named Garuba, near the north coast of Brazil."

"That's good enough," replied Ted. "We can find out just where that is located by the maps. And with your permission I will telegraph to your mother and ask her to forward the letter to me here at once."

"She'll do that, of course," said Grace. "When I got that word from my mother," she went on, "I was almost distracted. I was crazy to have something done at once, but I didn't know what or by whom. The thought of you flashed into my mind," she said, directly addressing Ted, "and I ventured to send you that telegram. It seemed terribly presumptuous, but I was at my wits' end. I knew how brave and generous you were and I was sure that if anyone could rescue my father and his friends it would be you."

"You were perfectly right in sending to

me. I told you if the opportunity ever offered I would do anything I could for you," said Ted earnestly. "I feel honored by the confidence that you have placed in me. I'll get ready right away, and in a few days, a week at most, I hope to be in Brazil."

"A week!" exclaimed Grace, in astonishment. "How could you possibly do that? I was thinking that even by the fastest trains and steamers it would be several weeks before you could get there."

"So it would," replied Ted, "if I went by steamer. But I have a faster method than that. I propose to go by airplane."

Grace gasped.

"By airplane!" she exclaimed. "I hadn't thought of that. But won't that be awfully dangerous, that long voyage over the sea?"

"It won't be as long as my trip over the Atlantic or the Pacific," replied Ted. "Then too, this trip will be largely over land and there will be numerous places at which to land along the way if anything should go wrong with the plane."

"Oh, can't I go with you?" pleaded Grace. "I wouldn't be any trouble. And I know how to handle a gun as well as most men. Do let me go!"

"It's mighty plucky of you to want to go," replied Ted. "There aren't many girls that

would be willing to take the risk. But really, Miss Larue, it's out of the question. The plane is only one element in the trip. There may be times when we shall have to descend and make our way through the jungle. There are wild beasts and reptiles. We may have to fight not only with them but with''—he was going to say ''head-hunters and cannibals,'' but thought it well to avoid those gruesome terms—''hostile natives. Your pluck would last, but your strength might not. No, I'm sorry, but we can have only men along on this trip.''

''It's so hard to wait with folded hands at home, conjuring up all sorts of horrible things.'' murmured Grace.

''I know, my dear,'' put in Charity, patting the girl's hand. ''Ain't I lain awake night after night praying to the good Lord when Ted has been away on those dangerous trips of his? But, as Ted says, this thing is a job for men.''

''Well, now,'' said Ted as he arose, ''I'm sure that you'll excuse Mr. Hapworth and me, for we've got to consult about a hundred things in connection with this trip and every minute is precious''

''Surely,'' replied Grace. ''And I only wish I could find words to thank you both as you deserve to be thanked.''

Charity bore the girl off and Ted and Walter went out on the veranda.

"What do you think of it, Walter?" asked Ted, when they were out of earshot of the women.

"I think we've taken over a mighty big contract," was the slow, thoughtful response, "but it's worth doing to help that poor girl. Plucky she is, as well as beautiful. I can well understand now how she was willing to risk her life in the blizzard."

"She's true blue," assented Ted. "Her mother, too, is the nicest kind of a woman. But to get down to brass tacks. We know now that her father and his party are not only missing. That would be bad enough. But they've been actually captured by savages. That makes it ten times harder. We've not only got to find them but rescue them from their captors."

"Yes," replied Hapworth, "and from what I've read I know that some of the tribes in that country are head-hunters and cannibals. They're bad medicine. It will be no cinch to attack them."

"We'll have to be well armed," stated Ted, "and we ought to have more men. Not only brave fellows, but men who could handle the plane, if you and I should fall sick or be wounded, and fellows of that kind don't grow on every bush."

"Right," agreed Hapworth. "But let's dis-

miss that for the present. The first thing to think about is the plane."

"That's what's worrying me," replied Ted. "If it were just a matter of reaching a certain point, the plane I've got would carry the two of us. But now we've got to have one that will carry about eight. Say we take two men with us. That would make four in all. But there are the missing people to be considered. It wouldn't do us any good to rescue them from the savages if we couldn't bring them back with us. From all accounts, if they're still alive, there are four of them, besides the two who escaped. That would make eight in all for the return journey.

"Where are we going to get such a plane? There's nothing as big as that at the aero plant here in Bromville, and of course to have one built is out of the question. It would take months. We might try to hire one of the big cabin planes somewhere in this country, but you know the red tape and the waste of time involved in that. Gee, what a problem!"

CHAPTER IX

Off for the Jungle

"Ted," asked Walter Hapworth slowly, "do you believe in a special Providence?"

Ted Scott looked at his companion in surprise.

"I suppose I do," he replied. "But what in the mischief are you driving at?"

"Just this. For the past few months we've been having built at our plant in Detroit a special cabin plane that I was going to use for a sample in trying to get orders from the passenger carrying plane people. It's one of the finest things of the kind—the very finest, I think, but perhaps I'm prejudiced—that has ever been constructed. It lays over anything I've yet seen. It will easily carry eight—on a pinch ten or maybe twelve could be crowded into it. And the beauty of it is that the last touch has been given to it and yesterday one of our pilots took it up for a trial flight. He telegraphed me only last night that it's a dandy

and works like a charm. Now if that isn't a special Providence, tell me what is."

Ted fairly danced up and down with delight.

"Walter, you've saved my life," he said and he grasped his friend's hand as though he would wrench it from its socket. "Do you really mean that we can have that plane?"

"Nothing else but," replied Hapworth, with a grin. "I'll telegraph the plant this afternoon and tell them to send the plane here in charge of our most trusted pilot. It'll be here some time to-morrow and we'll get busy at once in stocking it up with supplies and fuel. As far as the plane is concerned we ought to be able to start on our trip day after to-morrow at least."

"We'll do that," declared Ted eagerly. "We'll get what supplies we need here to carry us to Miami, Florida. That's right on our way to Brazil. I'll telegraph on ahead for them to have ready for us at Miami everything we can possibly want for our journey. Jove, Walter, you've lifted me up to the seventh heaven! Now while you're getting in touch with your plant in Detroit, I'll go down town and see about the fuel, the arms, and the supplies."

It was a breathlessly busy time that Ted Scott had for the next few hours, making arrangements for the outfitting of the plane. Not so busy, however, that he did not find time to

try to solve one other pressing problem—that which concerned the human element.

He hurried over to the aero plant, found Mark Lawson and Jack Forrest and led them out to his hangar on the flying field.

"Boys," he said without preamble, "are you game for a big adventure?"

Their eyes lighted up as they looked at his glowing face.

"Anything from pitch and toss to manslaughter," answered Mark promptly.

Jack nodded.

"That goes double," he said.

Ted laughed.

"It won't be pitch and toss," he said, "and I hope it won't be manslaughter—except perhaps in self-defense. But here's the proposition."

He sketched briefly the facts of the situation and the two young men listened with their eyes growing bigger and their breath coming fast.

"I'm not disguising anything," said Ted. "I'm laying all my cards on the table. I tell you straight it's a mighty dangerous trip. Any one of us—all of us for that matter—may very readily lose his life. There isn't even any money in it, except of course that I pay all expenses and will see that you have the same salary and more than you would have if you remained here working at the plant.

"On the other hand, there's the excitement of the adventure, the experience you would gain in handling the plane at times under all conditions of wind and weather, and, if we succeed, of rescuing some of our fellow countrymen from a bad fix. Neither one of you is married, so that you don't have to think of wife or kids. That's one reason among others why I've put the proposition up to you. The main reason, though, is that I know the kind of fellows you are and I'd rather have you at my back in case of trouble than anyone I know.

"So there's the thing, boys, in a nutshell. It's a gamble. If you don't want to take the chance, I won't blame you a bit and we'll be the same pals as ever. How about it?"

"I'm in it with both feet," burst out Mark impetuously.

"If I had as many feet as a centipede I'd be in it with all of them," chortled Jack. "I look on it as the chance of a lifetime."

"Bully!" exclaimed Ted, as they shook hands to bind the bargain. "Come down and see me at the hotel to-night and we'll go over all the details. In the meantime, see the manager of the plant and find out whether it will be all right with him."

"That goes without saying," replied Mark. "Everybody in the works thinks you're the greatest thing that ever happened. All they

need to know is that Ted Scott wants a thing and it's as good as done. They'll hold our jobs for us, all right. Golly, I can hardly wait! When do you propose to start?"

"Day after to-morrow, if possible," replied Ted Scott.

Walter Hapworth was delighted when he heard of the recruits that Ted had secured.

"Now if that plane of yours gets here to-morrow, we'll be sitting pretty," remarked Ted cheerfully.

"It'll get here all right," replied Hapworth confidently. "Had the manager on the long-distance phone this afternoon and he knows just what's expected. The weather's fine and there oughtn't to be anything to hinder. Renton, our best pilot, will be in charge of her, and he's never fallen down yet on anything we've given him to do."

"Have you given her a name yet?" asked Ted hurriedly.

"Not yet," replied Hapworth. "Have you any suggestion to make?"

"What's the matter with calling her the *Rescue?*" asked Ted.

"Nothing at all the matter with that. Let's hope she justifies the name. I'd hate to make a failure of this job."

A little before noon on the following day the cabin plane arrived. It was one of the largest

that had ever been seen in the vicinity and presented a beautiful spectacle as it hovered over the air field and spiraled toward its landing. Like a huge bird, it settled to the earth and ran along to where Ted Scott and Walter Hapworth, with a number of others, were eagerly waiting.

The pilot, a bronzed, sturdy young fellow, jumped to the ground with a broad grin on his face.

"Here I am, boss," he said, as he shook hands with Mr. Hapworth.

"Good for you, Renton!" replied Hapworth. "I knew I could depend on you. Have any trouble on the way?"

"Not a particle," was the reply. "Say, this is some plane, I'm telling you. Acted sweet and pretty all the way. She's fit to fly for a man's life."

"That's just what she's going to do," replied Hapworth. "You hit the nail on the head that time, Renton. This is Mr. Scott. Perhaps you've met him."

"Never had that pleasure," said Renton, as he took the hand that Ted held out to him, "but I've seen his face in pictures a thousand times. Maybe the boys back in Detroit won't be envious when I tell them that I've shaken hands with the greatest airman in the world!"

"Nothing like that," laughed Ted. "Just

let's say the luckiest. But now let's take a look at this wonderful plane of yours. Say, Walter, but it's a beauty!"

"Isn't it?" said Hapworth, with justifiable pride. "But you haven't seen anything yet. Just wait till you go all over it. Look at this wing with its lift braces. It's made of duraluminum throughout. Look at the ribs with holes punched and flanged to give it rigidity. See these tube drag struts with end fittings to take the swedged drag wires. Want anything stouter or stronger than that?"

"I should say not!" replied Ted. "I like these reserve gas tanks in the wing too. What are they made of?"

"Terne plate," was the reply. "Notice that they have a filler neck that permits filling without the use of a funnel. Another thing about the wings: They're pin-jointed to the side of the fuselage so that the entire depth of the wing can be used for cabin space. And talking of cabin, I want you to see that before you look at another thing. It's my special pride."

Ted Scott did not wonder that the chief owner of the factory that made the *Rescue* was proud of it. The cabin was a little over four feet broad, five feet high and fourteen feet long. It was finished with embossed board, trimmed in cloth with aluminum strips about windows and doors. There was one wide door

on the right side of the cabin and one on the left side of the pilot's compartment. The ceiling was fitted with dome lights. Upholstered reed chairs were secured to the floor. Windows ran all around the room, fitted with unbreakable glass. These slid back and forth as desired. There was a washroom in the rear and a storeroom for supplies. A mat of the automobile type lay on the floor.

"All the comforts of home!" exclaimed Ted. "Why, it's as comfortable as a limousine."

The dashboard had a complete equipment, including a turn and bank indicator, climb indicator, oil pressure gauge, oil temperature gauge, altimeter, clock, instrument light and magneto switch. There were devices for heating and ventilating the cabin. There was a silencer that muffled the roar of the engine. There was an ingenious contrivance whereby the entire tail wheel assembly could be removed through the bottom of the fuselage, simply by loosing two nuts. The extremely powerful motors were of the same incomparable type as those that had already carried Ted Scott over the Atlantic and the Pacific.

"It's the last word in airplane construction," pronounced Ted, when he had gone over every part with the most careful attention. "Walter, you've got a winner in this plane. I don't know of anything that can touch it."

"I knew you'd be pleased with it," said Walter Hapworth, much gratified. "But just wait till you see her speed! She can make a hundred and twenty-five right along and a hundred and fifty if pressed. And now that we've feasted our eyes on her; we'd better get busy and stock her up with gas and supplies. Renton will stay here and help us till we get started."

The whole party worked like beavers all the rest of that day and far into the evening, and before they retired everything was in readiness for a start early the next morning.

News of the venture had spread, and a large part of Bromville's population was on hand to wish the daring aviators good luck on their perilous voyage.

"I shall never forget your bravery and goodness in doing all this for Mother and me," said Grace to Ted, with a choke in her voice, as he was drawing on his gloves and helmet.

"Just as I'll never forget what you did for me," replied Ted warmly.

"If anything happens to you and all these other brave men, I shan't forgive myself for being the cause of it," said Grace. "I shall always remember that if I hadn't sent that telegram——"

"I'm sure that things are going to be all right," said Ted, when the girl paused in a

struggle for self-control. "I'll venture a prediction: There are four going out with this plane. There will be eight coming back in it. One of the eight will be your father, another will be Dayton Jarvis"—he noted how the swift blood mantled her cheeks at the last name—"and the rest of your father's party will make up the balance. I'm not the seventh son of a seventh son, but you see if I'm not a good prophet."

"Oh, do you really believe that?" exclaimed the girl.

"Sure I do," declared Ted stoutly, throwing into his words a conviction that was perhaps a bit exaggerated, for he was under no delusions as to the magnitude of the task before him.

Ted bade a loving farewell to Eben, whose voice was husky, and to Charity, whose eyes were wet, shook hands with Grace, and with a wave of the hand that included all others jumped into the plane into which his comrades had preceded him.

The blocks were knocked away, the *Rescue* roared down the runway for a few hundred yards and then soared like a great bird into the skies.

CHAPTER X

Speeding over the Sea

A thunderous shout came up from the crowd below as the *Rescue,* after attaining a height of a thousand feet, was brought to an even keel. Ted circled the field three times and then set the nose of his plane toward the south.

"This is the life!" chortled Mark Lawson, in wild exhilaration, as he felt the rush of the wind.

"The only life worth living," declared Jack Forrest, his face glowing and eyes alight with the spirit of adventure.

"Spoken like true airmen," stated Ted, grinning. "The solid earth is good enough at times, but, oh, you sky!"

"We couldn't have chosen a finer day to make the trip," put in Walter Hapworth. "It's made to order."

It was indeed an ideal day for flying. There was a light breeze blowing, crisp but not too cold, and it was directly in the rear of the plane,

so that it added to rather than detracted from its speed.

Ted was delighted with the working of the plane. It rode like a gull on the wind and responded to his lightest touch on the controls.

"Isn't she a peach?" asked Walter Hapworth proudly.

"She is and then some!" returned Ted enthusiastically. "Hardly a bit of vibration. Works like a charm. Runs herself, almost. You people struck twelve, Walter, when you designed this plane. You'll have the buyers standing in line when you begin to turn these out in quantities."

"How fast are we going now?" inquired Mark.

"A little better than a hundred," replied Ted, with a glance at his instrument board. "But we're just jogging along now. I'm going to let her out a little, and you watch our smoke."

He accelerated the speed to a hundred and ten, a hundred and twenty, a hundred and thirty, and the *Rescue* darted through the air like an arrow.

"That's enough just now," said Ted. "The engines are new yet and I don't want to strain her. But I can feel that she isn't anywhere near her limit. She can do a hundred and fifty without turning a hair."

"Perhaps we'll wish she could do two hundred when the head-hunters get after us," remarked Mark, grinning.

"Perhaps," agreed Ted, with a smile. "But I hope we'll do the chasing and the head-hunters do the running. We'll have all the advantage when it comes to speed."

The weather continued fine and the *Rescue* flew along, fairly eating up the miles. With every hundred miles reeled off there was a perceptible change in the temperature. They were approaching the land of perennial flowers and sunshine.

"How long before we reach Miami?" asked Mark.

"Some time in the early evening, if everything goes well," replied Ted. "I hope to spend no more time there than necessary. I think our stores and gas will be waiting for us and we'll stock up the plane at once."

"Going to a hotel for the night?" asked Jack.

"No," answered Ted. "We'll sleep on board the plane. We can snooze here very comfortably. Then, at the first streak of dawn, we'll be up and away. I want to take advantage of the weather while it lasts. No saying how soon it will break."

"Let me try my hand at running the plane for a while, Ted, will you?" asked Mark.

"Sure!" replied Ted. "Jack, too, can have his turn. You boys can't get too much practice to suit me. No telling at what time Walter or I may get knocked out, and then it will be up to you to do the piloting."

Mark and Jack eagerly embraced the opportunity.

Dusk came on and deepened into dark. But the moon came up and as it was nearly at its full it made flying almost as easy as in the daytime.

About nine o'clock they saw in the distance the lights of a large city.

"Miami," pronounced Ted, as he took charge, relieving Hapworth, who had also taken his turn at the controls. "Now it only remains to pick out the airport and make a landing."

He circled about the beautiful city, whose myriad glittering lights made it resemble an enchanting bit of fairyland, located the flying field in the outskirts, and came down to a perfect landing.

There was scarcely anyone about except a few pilots, some mechanics, and several officials of the field.

To Ted's great satisfaction, all the supplies that he had ordered were on hand. The four aviators set to work at once loading them into the plane in as compact a space as possible and with due regard to the balance of the machine.

Too much weight on one side or the other would impair its flying qualities.

They worked hard, and in two hours the plane was loaded and its tanks filled with sufficient gas to carry them to their destination. Then, when the finishing touch had been given, they bestowed themselves comfortably in the cabin and slept soundly until the eastern sky began to redden with the dawn.

"Another glorious day in prospect," remarked Ted, as he scanned the sky, "and it's up to us to make the most of it. By night I want to be well down the West Indies and heading for the South American coast."

They had a hearty breakfast, jumped into the plane and Ted lifted it into the skies and sped out over the waters of the Atlantic.

"Our last sight of home for a long time," murmured Mark, as he watched the shores of the United States receding into the distance behind them.

Not one of them but felt a pang at the thought that they had severed the last link that held them to their beloved land, and deep in the heart of each, though none gave it utterance, was the thought that possibly they would never see that land again.

CHAPTER XI

A Race for Life

On and on the *Rescue* went with a following wind. The flyers crossed the Bahamas, consisting of scores of islands great and small, some many miles in area, others mere sand spits basking in the sun.

"If those islands could speak, what stories they could tell," remarked Walter Hapworth.

"Yes," assented Ted, "stories of pirate vessels and walking the plank, and roaring guns and sinking ships."

"And buried treasure with skeletons left to guard the doubloons and ducats and pieces of eight," added Mark, grinning.

A little while later Ted pointed to an island rising out of the sea to the left of the course they were traversing.

"Over there is San Salvador, where Christopher Columbus first landed in fourteen ninety-two," he said.

"There's a thrill in that," observed Jack.

"If old Chris could only have known what

that landing meant to the world," murmured Mark.

They passed the island of Martinique, with the monster volcano still keeping watch over the dead city that it had destroyed in a moment as one snuffs out a candle.

"I suppose that was one of the most sudden disasters in history," remarked Hapworth. "One minute it was a smiling town of many thousand people. Two minutes later every one of those thousands was dead."

Like a meteor the *Rescue* kept on, as though it knew the terrible need that demanded all the speed of which it was capable.

"At this rate we ought to be well down along the Brazilian coast by to-morrow night, don't you think?" queried Mark.

"I shouldn't be surprised," replied Ted. "The plane's certainly going like a house afire."

"How far is it from Miami to Garuba?" inquired Jack.

"Roughly, I should say that it's about three thousand miles as the crow flies," Ted answered.

"Going to stop anywhere to replenish your gas?" asked Hapworth.

"Not if I can help it," replied Ted. "We have plenty to last us until we get to Garuba.

From what I've read of it that's a pretty big city, and there's no doubt I can get all the fuel I want there. We'll stock up there to the limit and then, ho, for the jungle!"

"If only the weather keeps as fine as this, we'll have nothing left to ask for," remarked Hapworth.

"That's almost too much to expect," said Ted. "I'm leary of this West Indian section. At any time we may be caught in a hurricane. Remember that one, Walter, that hit us when we were looking for Tom Ralston and Paul Monet?"

"Can I ever forget it?" exclaimed Walter Hapworth feelingly. "One such experience is enough for a lifetime. I never thought we'd get through it alive."

"Looks to me as though a haze were rising out of the sea over there to the east," observed Mark.

Ted looked in the direction of his friend's pointing finger and his cheeks blanched.

"That's no haze," he exclaimed. "It's a waterspout and it's coming this way!"

He opened the throttle to its fullest extent and the *Rescue* leaped forward as though it had received an electric shock.

"Any danger from it?" asked Jack.

"Danger?" repeated Ted grimly. "So much

danger that, if it catches us, it will make matchwood of the plane and send us plunging into the sea."

"As bad as that?" asked Mark.

"Worse," Ted gritted through his teeth and said no more, devoting all his efforts toward escaping the threatened peril.

As Ted had said, the waterspout was coming their way. With every minute now they could see it more clearly, a great revolving mass of water like a gigantic cone, broad where it touched the sea and gradually tapering as it rose toward the skies. It was approaching at tremendous speed and with a roar like that of a cataract.

"Hadn't we better turn and run before it?" asked Hapworth.

"No use," replied Ted. "It's going faster than we can and would overtake us. Our only hope lies in getting out of its path before it catches us."

"Can you do it?" gasped Jack.

"It's touch and go, but we have a chance," replied Ted.

Nearer and nearer came the whirling death, louder and louder grew its roar. The daring young pilot was cutting straight across its path, going like the wind.

Could he clear that farther edge? If not, he was doomed.

On and on went the *Rescue*. Now the spout was so near and so high that it cut off the light of the sun. The noise was deafening.

The hearts of the voyagers were beating like trip hammers. All knew that they were coming to grips with death. Yet no one spoke. They were beyond words.

With a terrific howl the waterspout bore down upon them!

CHAPTER XII

Getting in Touch

There was a roar as of a thousand cannon, a blinding rush of spray, and the waterspout sped past, barely grazing the tail of the plane.

The passage of the monster created a partial vacuum, and in this the *Rescue* tossed about so violently that it was in danger of being overturned.

But in all that wild welter Ted Scott never lost his head for a moment, and under his masterly control the plane returned to an even keel, while far off to the west the waterspout vanished in a cloud of mist and spray.

"Gee, Ted, but that was a close race!" exclaimed Mark, as soon as he had got back his breath.

"So close that there was only a fraction of a second between us and death," added Walter Hapworth.

The rest of the day passed without misadventure. The breeze was light but pleasant,

and what little there was helped rather than hindered them.

They took turns at the control and Mark Lawson and Jack Forrest made marked progress in the art of navigation. Walter Hapworth took observations from time to time in order to check up on the instruments.

Night came on with the suddenness with which darkness falls in tropical regions. For they were now fully in the tropics and had left the temperate zone definitely behind them. This fact was emphasized still further when the stars came out, showing constellations that are never visible in the North.

"How are we going to make ourselves understood in Brazil?" wondered Mark. "I suppose Spanish is spoken there altogether, and I don't know a word of it."

"Same here," murmured Jack.

"I don't think we'll have much difficulty," answered Ted. "The prevailing language is Portuguese, not Spanish, but Mr. Hapworth knows the tongue. Moreover, I imagine that most educated people there and the business men speak Spanish, and I can make something of a hack at that myself. To tell the truth, I know a little Portuguese. So we'll be all right at the start. Later on when we get into the jungle it may be different. Even there, though, the natives must have a smattering of Portu-

guese. And what we can't do with words we'll have to do by signs. I imagine we'll get along."

All through the night the *Rescue* sped on her way, her engines working beautifully. By eleven o'clock in the morning they caught sight of a large town that they knew must be Garuba.

The young aviator circled about the place looking for a possible air field, but there was nothing of the kind in sight. There was, however, a race track in the environs of the city, and as it was almost as level as a billiard table Ted had no trouble in making a landing.

An airplane was a rare sight in that part of the world, and the voyagers were soon surrounded by a large crowd, all agog with curiosity. Luckily, the mayor of the town was among them and his authority kept the throng in check.

He was courteous and cordial and welcomed the visitors warmly. He established a guard of police about the plane and invited Ted and his companions to his home for dinner.

They had to beg off, explaining the need for haste. While Walter Hapworth, Mark Lawson and Jack Forrest attended to the refueling and provisioning of the plane, the young leader of the expedition took the mayor apart, stated his mission, and sought to get from him all the

information he could regarding the missing scientists.

As the mayor was an educated man and had traveled widely, he spoke English fairly well, and he and Ted had no difficulty in understanding each other.

But the information the mayor could give was lamentably little. Yes, he had heard rumors that there had been trouble in the jungle between a native tribe and a party of American scientists. He did not know the details. He had an impression that the matter had been referred to the Brazilian Federal Government and no doubt they would do all they could to rescue the imperiled explorers. He most heartily hoped they would.

"But," Ted said, "are there not now in Garuba two of the members of the party who escaped from the savages? The message we received in America telling of the disaster came from Garuba."

The mayor shook his head.

"It may have been mailed from Garuba," he said. "But it was probably brought in from some village to be mailed. There are many places that have no post office facilities and they make use of ours. No, I am quite sure that there are no Americanos in Garuba."

Ted's heart sank.

"But wait!" the mayor exclaimed as he tapped his forehead. "I remember now hearing that there were two Americanos some time ago at Alega, a little town about ten miles from here. One of them, I think, was sick. They may be there yet. I will give you a conveyance and an escort to go there if you like."

"That's very good of you," said Ted warmly. "But I think it would be better for me to go there by plane. If you will give me the exact directions, I can get there in a few minutes after my plane is refueled."

The mayor did as requested, again expressing his regret that the visitors could not honor his home and city by staying longer. Ted responded in kind, but he was in a perfect fever to be off to interview the "Americanos."

His companions had in the meantime been working fast and furiously and in less time than Ted had dared to hope they were ready to continue their journey.

With warm thanks for the cordial welcome they had received they jumped into the cockpit and were off. Ted had carefully noted the directions he had received and in a few minutes was hovering over a little village that he felt sure was Alega.

To call it even a village seemed to dignify it too much, for it looked like a mere group of

scattered huts standing among the trees without plan or order.

An open field near by promised a fairly good landing place, and the young pilot brought the *Rescue* down without much difficulty.

The voyagers climbed out of the plane and looked about them curiously.

"Looks like the jumping-off place," remarked Jack.

It was indeed a remote outpost of civilization. Some huts were huddled together in the midst of a clearing. From one of these smoke curled lazily.

Ted pointed toward it.

"The only sign of life hereabouts," he remarked. "Apart from that, this might be a camp of the dead."

"Mid-afternoon is siesta hour in the hot countries," Hapworth reminded him. "You won't find the natives astir in this heat, not if they know themselves."

"Don't blame them, either," said Mark, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

Ted once more indicated the smoke.

"Where there's smoke there should be fire," he said. "Let's investigate."

They crossed the clearing toward the building in question, and still there was no sign of life in the village.

"Whoever lives here has no fear of a native uprising," jested Jack.

"I guess there's not much danger of that," replied Ted. "This appears like pretty thick jungle to us, but I suppose that to men like Mr. Larue and his party of explorers it would seem to be quite a civilized community."

"Everything is comparative," agreed Hapworth, with a shrug. "Hello! Look at this!"

They had reached a low door in the wall of the hut. The door swung inward, permitting a partial view of the interior.

Along one wall of the room a fireplace of sorts had been built, and there the travelers discovered the fire whose thin spiral of smoke had beckoned to them from outside.

An iron pot hung from a hook above the flames. In the pot ingredients of a meal simmered gently.

"Jaguar stew, I'll bet," suggested Mark, grinning. "Even at that, it makes me hungry."

"I wouldn't mind dipping into the mess," remarked Jack.

As he spoke, an old, bent Indian shambled into view and paused to stare stupidly at the newcomers. He was a thin, withered scarecrow of a man. His shoulders were stooped, his scrawny neck shot off at a sharp angle from his breastbone and the face atop the neck was wizened and crisscrossed with wrinkles. There

was no shadow of expression in his faded eyes as they regarded the strangers.

"How you come?" he grunted in Portuguese. "Where you come from?"

Ted smiled and pointed upward.

"We were flying in the sky," he said, "and we came down to make talk with the people on the ground."

The vacant expression fled from the eyes of the native. In its place was suspicion.

"You no come from sky," he grunted. "Only the birds fly."

Walter Hapworth turned to Ted with a laugh.

"Better leave the plane out of the story," he said. "The more you tell the truth the less he'll believe you."

"We are looking for some Americanos—" Ted began.

"You need look no further," came in a deep, booming voice.

CHAPTER XIII

In Barbarous Hands

Startled by the sudden interruption, Ted Scott and his companions looked in the direction from which the voice had come.

A glance was enough to prove that the great voice was in keeping with its owner. He had come in through a back door of the cabin and now stood revealed to them, a huge man with a face the color of a ruddy nut and a bristling growth of beard. A noticeable thing was the contrast between that beard and the man's hair. The beard was dark, almost black; the hair, grown long and reaching to the shoulders, was a vivid white.

Despite his unkempt appearance, the powerful hands, ridged with deep scratches, the clothes that hung from his big frame in rags, the stranger bore the unmistakable stamp of a gentleman.

"I heard what you said to Pedo," he said with a bow in the direction of the party, "and I gather that you are airmen whom business or

pleasure has brought to this part of the country. I was just about to eat. Pedo, set places for the gentlemen and serve the food. Such as it is, gentlemen, I hope you will do me the honor to partake of it."

Pedo scurried about, following directions.

"It is good of you to offer food to us," said Ted, with a smile. "To tell the truth, we've worked up a formidable appetite."

The big man shrugged and smiled into his beard.

"One does," he said. "That is customary in the jungle. Lucky the man who has food to match his appetite. The meal is ready," and he waved them to seats at a rude table on which Pedo had set wooden bowls filled with a savory mixture.

He seated himself with them, though he scarcely touched the contents of the bowl Pedo set before him. He leaned forward and bent a somber gaze on Ted.

"I caught something of what you were saying to Pedo," he said. "I do not want to pry into your business, but I judge that you are airmen making a trip on business or pleasure. I was wondering if I could be of any service to you in your quest."

"Of the very greatest service I imagine," returned Ted, "for, as a matter of fact, I think you are the very person we are seeking."

The man started.

"Looking for me?" he said.

"Yes," replied Ted. "That is, if you are one of the members of the Hamilton Larue expedition. I take it I am speaking to Professor Bromley."

"No," answered the man, his eyes no longer bleak but aflame with interest. "Bromley was here, but he has gone. My name is Allen. But I am—or was—a member of the Larue expedition. But what is all this leading to? You don't mean—you can't mean that you have come on a mission of rescue?"

"Just that," affirmed Ted, and went on to tell the happenings since he had first received the appeal for help from Grace Larue.

The man leaped from his seat and began to pace the floor.

"And you have come all the way from America by airplane—flown all this distance to try to save men who were nothing to you personally, whom you have never even seen! Brave men! Brave men!" His eyes swept around the table, including all his guests in the tribute. "A noble thing! An expedition worthy to be headed by Ted Scott!"

Ted started and stared.

"You know my name?" he asked.

"Who does not?" replied Mr. Allen. "I was in America after your return from Paris when

all the world was ringing with your praises. I saw you then and I've seen your picture many times since. But I never thought that I'd have the honor to meet you—least of all under such circumstances as these."

He reached out his hand and gripped Ted's warmly.

"Well, now that you've heard our story, suppose you tell us yours," suggested Ted. "But first what about Professor Bromley? It was he who sent the letter from Garuba, and naturally he was the one that we expected first to meet."

"He and his companion, Rixton, were here," explained Mr. Allen; "but they've gone on to the Brazilian capital to try to get the Government to make an effort to rescue the remaining members of the party from the savages. But I haven't much hope of anything from that quarter. By the time an expedition could be organized, the fate of Larue and Jarvis would probably have been settled one way or another."

"Then Mr. Larue and Professor Jarvis are the only ones that are still captive?" asked Hapworth.

"Yes," was the reply. "There were six of us at the start. Bromley and Rixton were separated from the rest of us at the first onset. Later on Professor Sancha and I escaped and

found our way here after an experience that will be as a nightmare to me for the rest of my life."

His face was gray with awful memories.

"I could tell you things!" he cried, bringing his great fist down with a crash on the table. "I could tell you things! If you seek Larue, the chances are you will see things for yourself —things you will spend the rest of your life trying to forget."

He lapsed into a brooding study and for several moments sat there, his fists clenched, apparently unaware of his audience. They were filled with impatience but awaited his time.

At last Allen roused himself from his abstraction.

"Look here," he said, "I'll tell you the whole story from the start."

"Do," said Ted, "and we'll try to interrupt no more than is necessary."

"Since you know so much about us," began Allen, "perhaps you know also the purpose of our expedition?"

"We knew that you were on the trail of a buried city, Mr. Allen," replied Hapworth. "You and your associates had reason to believe, we understand, that, if unearthed, the city would prove to be of considerable importance historically."

"That was our belief," agreed Allen. "We

were about to substantiate it by actual facts when the event occurred that was to terminate our activities. On the night of the great day when our spades had struck for the first time on masonry our camp was surrounded by savages. They stole upon us so silently that we were scarcely aware of their presence until the four of us who were captured found ourselves bound and driven into the clearing before our tents. We were captives, and that fact was impressed upon us in the most brutal manner possible."

Once more the great fist smote the table. His eyes glowed vengefully.

"They began to torture us at once," he went on. "That torture was to draw information from us."

"What sort of information?" asked Ted intently.

"They thought that we were looking for treasure," was the reply. "They had probably been lurking about for days watching us. They had seen us dig, now here, now there, survey again, and once more start an excavation."

He paused for a moment and his brow knitted.

"We learned later," he resumed, "from one of the guides who had been made a prisoner with us and was faithful, that the buried city for which we had been searching was a sort of

myth to the savages, that they knew of—or at least believed in—its existence, and that the city had been ruled by one Aron Medi, a potentate of great wealth. It was also believed by the natives that in vaults beneath the city, Aron Medi had amassed great stores of gold and silver and precious gems."

"And they thought that you knew the whereabouts of this great wealth!" exclaimed Mark.

"Exactly," Allen nodded. "They were determined to wrest the information from us. It was only after they had tormented us for a while and feared that we would die under it that someone with a gleam of sense decided that we might be of more use to them alive than dead.

"Mr. Larue strengthened this suggestion by promising that we would use all our skill in witch and witchcraft—they believed in that, you know—in attempting to locate the treasure for them."

"Did you?" asked Jack.

"Of course not, though we went through a lot of grotesque motions," replied Allen. "In all probability there never was a treasure, except in the legends of the savages. At any rate we never saw any sign of it. At the end of three days and nights of fruitless searching the chief, in a rage, decreed our death."

Again there was a pause during which Allen

stared at the table and no one of his auditors ventured to interrupt.

"We were to die in the full of the moon," he went on at last. "This was two nights from the time of our sentence. There was no hope for us. Twice we had tried to escape and twice had been thwarted. The only bright spot we could see was the fact that Bromley and Rixton had managed to evade capture when we were first attacked. There was the faint hope that they might reach some outpost of civilization and bring us help.

"It was a faint hope, however," the deep voice boomed on, "and as the hour of our doom approached that hope deserted us altogether. Larue and Sancha were sickening with jungle fever and the long strain on mind and body. Sancha babbled constantly. It was enough to drive one mad."

CHAPTER XIV

Terrible Moments

The big explorer paused in his story and glared so fiercely at the native that Pedo turned and scurried hastily out of sight. Allen shook his head impatiently as though by that gesture he would drive out a host of hideous memories.

"At dusk on the night set for our execution," he went on, "the drums began to beat, a sound weird enough to turn the blood cold in one's veins, provided it had not already congealed. I think mine had. At any rate I was conscious of no particular sensation as with my comrades I was led out into a space before the camp."

His auditors listened breathlessly. They were reliving that scene in the jungle.

"The manner of our death had been described to us gloatingly and in painstaking detail by Ago, the chief," the speaker went on. "We were to be shot full of arrows that had been dipped in the juice of a poison flower. It seems that the poison was a deadly one but slow. It sometimes requires eight, ten, twelve

hours to do its work. The arrows were to be aimed at our arms and legs, carefully avoiding a vital spot. Then when we were bristling with them we were to be pegged out on the ground on our backs until after terrible agonies death should come to our relief. Oh, it was rare sport that they promised themselves!"

"The fiends!" cried Ted.

"Demons from the bottomless pit!" breathed Hapworth.

"They were all of that," assented Allen. "Only, as I have said, I seemed at the moment to be devoid of all feeling. I believe the suffering of the last few days had made me numb. I never can remember clearly the events of that night. I can see the rows of natives lined up with their bows and arrows. I can see the face of the chief and I can hear the pulsing of the drums. There was poor, fever-stricken Sancha mumbling his inanities into my ear. Over all was the oppressive blackness of the jungle night, relieved only by the flickering of torches. It pressed upon us. It filled our lungs. It was the horror of the worst nightmare I have ever known, magnified a thousand times."

A shudder of sympathy ran through his auditors. Ted's predominant feeling was one of thankfulness that Grace Larue had not come with them as she had wanted to. How could she have borne listening to the story? For it

was the story too of her father and her lover!

"I heard the chief give a command," went on the speaker. "A host of arrows were fitted to bows, a host of arms swung upward.

"Then the night was broken by a fiendish yell. From the surrounding bushes came scores of men and flung themselves upon our captors."

"Hurrah!" cried Jack Forrest involuntarily.

Allen looked at Jack with a faint smile.

"They were not rescuers," he said dryly. "Probably they were just as bad as the ones that held us captive. They simply saw a chance to catch their tribal enemies off their guard and took advantage of it. The newcomers were head-hunters, I think, from the insignia on their breasts."

The term was ominous, thought Ted. Head-hunters!

"I found myself," resumed Allen, "in the midst of a surging, shrieking crush of men. Sancha was hanging to my arm, still babbling, poor wretch. I flung him over my shoulder—he was of slender frame, while I am, as you see, a man of iron build.

"Somewhere in the press I caught sight of Larue and Jarvis. They were fighting desperately. I called to them to follow, that this was our chance while our enemies were at one

another's throats. I saw Larue wrench a spear from the hand of a savage and lay about him with the fury of a lion.

"From that time on everything is indistinct. I have no recollection of how I won clear of that fearful mêlée with poor Sancha flung over my shoulder. I must have been wounded, for I have the scars of spear points on my chest and legs. Then at last I have a vague recollection of the cessation of sound. There was a silence that wrapped itself around me like a blanket. I felt myself falling with Sancha still on my shoulder, falling as lightly as though I had been buoyed up by clouds. I had no curiosity as to where I was going. The sensation of letting go was wholly delightful."

Not a sound came from the enthralled listeners. They could see that fight, hear those yells, follow the stumbling footsteps of the wounded man who would not forsake his friend.

"When I won through to my next conscious moment," went on Allen, "the sun was high in the sky, the morning was far gone toward noon. Sancha and I lay side by side in a soft, padded ditch, completely obscured from observation from the higher ground above by a rank, verdant growth. I could see how our captors in hunting for us, as they had undoubtedly done, had passed by our hiding place.

"Sancha, poor fellow, lay beside me like one

dead. The pulse was so feeble that I could detect no action, but it seemed to me that when I put my face close to his mouth I could feel the faintest stirring of his breath. I crawled to a stream near by and brought back water. Presently my poor friend opened his eyes and favored me with the first sane look I had seen in his eyes for days. He was very weak and could not walk. I carried him on my back."

He paused.

"I will not prolong the tale by telling you of the perils and hardships of our later adventures, gentlemen," he said. "Suffice it to say that we finally won our way through to this place, where we found that Bromley and Rixton had preceded us. As I told you, they've gone on to the capital to organize a rescue expedition."

"And Professor Sancha—where is he?" asked Ted.

A shadow passed over the bronzed face of the narrator.

"My poor friend Sancha," he said, "is lying at the point of death."

Murmurs of sympathy rose from Ted and his comrades. They had been deeply affected by Allen's vivid story. They had been gripped by the tale of his thrilling escape, and they could guess what prodigies of courage and endurance had been required of this man in his

efforts to bear his friend to a place of safety.

"All that superhuman effort for nothing," mused Ted aloud, "if poor Sancha must die after all."

"Yes," assented Allen, "I fear the worst. He is being attended at a cabin not far off by a herb doctor, the best we can find in this forsaken place. If he pulls through, it will be by a miracle."

Now Ted put a question that had been on the tip of his tongue all through the latter part of his host's recital.

"You say you saw Hamilton Larue in the thick of the fight," he said. "Have you any way of knowing whether he was successful in his attempt to escape?"

"No," replied Allen. "I did not see him again after that moment. But I have every reason to think that the head-hunters defeated our former captors and in their turn carried off Larue and Jarvis."

"From bad to worse!" ejaculated Mark.

Ted nodded gravely.

"Looks as though we had our work cut out for us," he said. "On what do you base your belief, Mr. Allen, that Mr. Larue and Professor Jarvis were carried off by the head-hunters?" he asked.

"On news brought by a native runner soon after we reached this place," was the reply.

"This fellow reported that there had been a fight between Ago and his braves and Durondo, chief of the head-hunters, and that Durondo had been victorious and had carried off two white prisoners. They of course could be no other than Larue and Jarvis."

Ted Scott sprang to his feet. Before his mind rose a picture of Grace Larue waiting in an agony of apprehension for word of her missing father and her lover.

"We'll find the camp or maloca or whatever you call it of this head-hunter Durondo and get those men or die in the attempt," he cried.

Fired by his enthusiasm, his comrades gave voice to a hearty shout that went echoing out into the sun-baked jungle, startling parrots and monkeys into violent protestations.

Allen rose to his feet and caught Ted's hand in a crushing grip.

"A thousand thanks!" he exclaimed. "And my warmest gratitude to you other brave fellows who have come to the aid of my sorely pressed comrades. I wish I could go with you," he added longingly, "but poor Sancha needs me and I must stay with him till the end. I suppose of course you're fully armed."

"Plenty of rifles and ammunition, besides knives and revolvers," Ted assured him. "In addition, we have a store of bombs and hand

grenades that are likely to give the head-hunters a surprise."

"Good!" exclaimed Allen. "May they fall where they'll do the most good."

"That native runner you spoke of," said Ted. "Is he anywhere within reach?"

"He's in the settlement somewhere," replied Allen. "Pedo, go and find Murano and bring him here."

The servant hurried out and in a few minutes returned with a swarthy Indian whose face and breast bore many scars of knife and spear.

CHAPTER XV

The Trail of the Yellow Death

Ted Scott looked at the Indian curiously and the latter looked back at him with a certain uneasiness in his eyes. He was a little apprehensive about people who came down from the skies. Who knew what witchcraft might be possessed by travelers of that kind?

But Ted had a gift for putting people at their ease, and soon had the native talking freely. The man had worked at one time on the docks at Rio de Janeiro and had picked up a good bit of English, which, helped out by the Portuguese with which Ted had some slight familiarity, made conversation fairly easy. Where this did not serve, Allen came to their assistance.

"When you saw the tribe of head-hunters led by Durondo," Ted asked, "could you tell the direction in which they were going?"

"Yes, senhor," replied Murano. "They were headed for the Trail of the Yellow Death. May their souls be accursed and their bodies

left as prey for the vultures! It was from one of them that I received this spear thrust in the arm"—he showed a livid scar—"and I would gladly see you fall upon them with that great white bird of yours and slay them all."

"This Trail of the Yellow Death," said Ted. "Why do you call it by that name?"

"Because of the yellow flowers that grow along the trail," was the answer. "To breathe the smell that comes from them is death."

"But if that is so, why do Durondo and his warriors go near such an evil place?" asked Ted anxiously.

"They have a drink that makes the poison harmless, so they pass on in safety," explained Murano. "But when their enemies pursue them, not knowing of the evil flowers, they fall one by one until none is left alive. Then Durondo's braves laugh much, and they come back and cut off their enemies' heads and stick them on poles above their wigwams."

"Where is the village—the maloca—of Durondo and his warriors?" pursued Ted.

"It lies beyond the Trail of the Yellow Death," replied Murano. "The maloca stands not far from where the cataract merges with the Roaring River. It is there that you will find the white men—if they still live. If they do not live, their heads will still be there."

At great length Ted Scott and Walter Hap-

worth pursued their inquiries, Walter using pencil and paper to jot down what Ted indicated might be landmarks in their search. Murano was clear enough as to the direction in which the quest should be prosecuted, but very vague as to distances. He knew nothing of miles as such, but spoke of "a day's journey," "a week's journey" and similar indefinite expressions, which meant much to him but conveyed very little to his questioner.

"Too bad," said Allen, when Ted deplored this vagueness as to distances. "If I hadn't been in such a dazed and distraught condition when I was bringing Sancha in, I might have got an accurate idea of the distance from here to the battle-field. As it is, it would be a mere guess on my part."

"A cheerful place, this Trail of the Yellow Death," remarked Walter Hapworth, after the Indian had been dismissed with thanks, his questioners having extracted from him all the information he possessed. "I wonder how much of it is truth and how much is just the fellow's imagination. These Indians are a superstitious lot."

"On the other hand, a great many queer things exist in the jungle," returned Ted. "I'm inclined to take it at its face value. You remember what Mr. Allen here told us of the

poison taken from flowers with which the arrows were tipped. There's probably something in the fellow's story. At any rate, thanks to him, we know approximately what to look for and where. It's a whole lot better than starting out blind."

It was nearly night by that time and they went early to bed, planning to start the first thing the following morning. The members of the searching party took shifts of two hours each in guarding the plane, for they did not want curious natives swarming over it during the night hours. They had come too far and their errand was too momentous to take any chances.

They were astir at dawn and sat down to a hearty meal that Pedo prepared for them. They went over the plane with the utmost care, testing every screw and bolt and strut, and when they were fully satisfied that it was in prime condition, Ted gave the signal for the start.

They shook hands with Allen before climbing into the machine.

"Thanks very much for your hospitality, Mr. Allen," said Ted. "I hope that when we come back we shall find that your friend Sancha has recovered."

"I hope so," returned Allen. "But the

chances are of the slightest. Good-by and good luck. I'll think often of you and only wish that I could go along."

The engine roared and the *Rescue* leaped forward.

It was not the spot that the young pilot would have chosen for a take-off, as the level space was none too long and ended in a heavy growth of trees that rose into the air to a great height. But there was no place in the vicinity that offered better chances. It was a case of take it or leave it.

The staccato roar of the engine tore the silence to shreds. The natives who had gathered leaped back in alarm and from a safe distance behind trees watched the departure of the giant bird.

It was good to leave the earth behind. Ted met the sting of the fresh, cool air with a challenging lift of his own spirit. He glanced at Hapworth and grinned. Hapworth grinned back and waved his hand in an easterly direction.

Ted understood. From that time on they were to keep the goal in view—the Trail of the Yellow Death and later the maloca of Durondo where "the cataract and the Roaring River met."

But that was not all the data they had ob-

tained from the Indian. Other landmarks had been pointed out.

There was the old crater, Kimoree, from which on a very still day smoke could still be seen rising lazily in the air. Kimoree, according to Murano, was close to the Trail of the Yellow Death.

Before one reached Kimoree, however, Ted had been told that they would pass over the burned and blackened village of an Indian tribe, the scene of a terrible massacre where every inhabitant, man, woman and child, had been ruthlessly put to death.

The weather had been brilliantly clear at the start, but after two hours had passed a thick haze obscured the light of the sun. It grew ever more dense until it completely enshrouded the plane, so that the voyagers could scarcely see from one end of it to the other.

"A perfect sea of fog!" exclaimed Hapworth, a trifle uneasily.

"Yes," replied Ted, as he stiffened in his seat. "But something worse is coming. Listen to that roar! Hold tight, fellows!"

A moment later a terrific gale struck the plane.

CHAPTER XVI

On the Edge of Disaster

Like a stricken thing the plane shook and quivered in every fiber. It careened so violently that had it not been for the straps that held the occupants they would have been thrown from their seats.

Utterly without warning, as is so often the case in the tropics, the storm had come upon them. The heavy fogs had prevented the voyagers from seeing in the heavens any signs that might have given notice of its coming.

The elements were in pandemonium. The roar of the gale was punctuated by the crashing of trees below them, as the monarchs of the jungle were uprooted and flung prostrate. Around the plane the wind tore as though seeking for a grip that would rend the structure apart.

But if the gale had caught them napping, it had not paralyzed with terror the superb nerve of the young airman thus suddenly called upon to give battle. Ted Scott gripped the stick and

set his jaw for the titanic struggle ahead of him.

It was no longer a question of keeping his course. It mattered not whether he was going north or south, east or west. The only thing that counted was to keep the plane from destruction.

The very size of the great bird was an added element of danger, because of the broader target it offered to the onslaught of the gale.

Now to the wind was added rain and thunder and lightning. The roar of the thunder was almost continuous. Jagged sheets of lightning shot athwart the sky, lighting the darkness with an unearthly glare, and the rain came down as though all the windows of heaven had been opened and a new flood was to overtake the earth.

Yet through all that turmoil Ted Scott kept the magnificent coolness that had marked him out as the greatest airman of the time. His comrades could not help him. All he asked of them was silence. On him and him alone rested the responsibility for the lives of all.

It was impossible to land. The thick fog shut out all sight of the earth below. Even if he had been able to detect a possible landing place, the gale would have prevented his going down in safety. It would have dashed the plane to earth and shattered it into fragments.

No, the battle must be fought out in the skies. How long it would last the young aviator did not know. But whether minutes or hours, he must manage somehow to keep the plane afloat.

He had been flying at a height of about four thousand feet. Now he pushed the stick and sought a lower altitude, in the hope of finding a quieter stratum of air.

But the hope soon vanished, for everywhere the gale was raging in unbridled fury. He pulled the stick and the *Rescue* darted upward to five, seven, ten thousand feet. But even this offered no respite from the hurricane. Its shrieking seemed like the mocking of ten thousand demons jeering at the puny mortal that dared to pit himself against their might.

For perhaps an hour the terrific battle waged. Then the gale ceased as suddenly as it had begun and retired, growling, into its caverns.

The flashes of lightning grew less frequent and the thunder ceased to roar. But the rain kept on as hard as ever.

Ted sank back into his seat greatly exhausted by his tremendous struggle with the elements. He felt as though he had been drawn through a threshing machine.

For the first time since the storm began he took a look at his companions. They, too, were

pale and weary with the mental strain, although all the physical work had fallen to Ted.

"That was marvelous work on your part, Ted," said Mark, and there was something approaching awe in his voice.

"You bet it was!" echoed Jack. "There were times up there when I thought we were goners."

"And would have been with anyone but Ted at the stick," put in Walter Hapworth. "No one but he could have brought us through such a gale."

"Oh, there are plenty," declared Ted. "It was simply a case of the job being up to me. But I'm free to say that I felt mighty good when the gale let up at last."

"Do you think it has hurt the plane any?" asked Hapworth, in some anxiety.

"I don't know," replied Ted. "It would be a miracle if it hadn't strained it somewhat. Seems to me she's wobbling a little. As soon as we can I think we'd better land and look it over. We can't afford to take any chances."

During the gale the fog had shredded away and the earth was now clearly visible some three thousand feet below.

Ted pushed the stick and the plane shot downward until it was at an altitude of not more than five hundred feet. Then he scanned the land carefully to find a place for a landing.

There was more than one sufficiently cleared and level spot that would have served under ordinary circumstances. But the pelting rain had turned most of these into seas of mud and the young airman knew that if he landed in any of them he would bog the machine.

At last, however, he espied a fairly level plateau that seemed to consist chiefly of stone worn smooth by the friction of the elements. He examined it carefully through his field glasses and determined that it would do.

Gradually he descended in spirals and made a perfect landing.

After the battle in the skies it was a relief to all to find themselves on firm ground. As soon as the plane came to a stop they all tumbled out with alacrity, regardless of the rain that was again coming down in torrents.

"Gee, but it's good to feel one's feet on solid ground again!" observed Mark.

"But not so good to be drenched through and through," added Jack. "There's a heap of overhanging rocks," he said, pointing to an opening in the cliff wall a little distance away. "Let's get under those and laugh at the rain."

There was no chance of working at the plane until the rain abated, and the others agreed to Jack's suggestion. The impact of the rain against the ground was like that of a miniature cataract, and they all felt a sense of relief

when they reached the opening in the face of the cliff and let themselves into a dry space that seemed to extend back for quite a distance.

"We'd better look out for snakes," suggested Jack, feeling his way in the darkness. "Seems to me this place has the smell of them. Ugh! What was that I stepped on?"

Ted whipped a flash light from his pocket and turned it about till it picked out Jack in the surrounding gloom.

"Nothing but a crooked stick," said Ted reassuringly, throwing the light down at Jack's feet. "May have felt like a snake in the darkness, but I can't see any signs of reptilian occupancy."

"Gee, that was a mouthful, Ted," chuckled Mark Lawson. "How did you get it out without choking?"

"It's a gift," laughed Ted.

He swung the flash light about and suddenly the laughter died out of his voice.

Picked out by the beam of light, two green jewels stared at him from the darkness, watchful, intent, motionless!

"Great Scott, Ted!" Walter Hapworth spoke softly, peering over his friend's shoulder into the shadows at the rear of the cave. "Do you see what I do?"

"Easy does it, Walter," murmured Ted. "Give the fellows the tip to back out of here

quickly if they value their lives. And tell them to make as little fuss about it as they can."

That the creature back of those watchful, gleaming eyes was a puma or a jaguar, Ted Scott had little doubt. By evil fortune they had stumbled into the lair of one of these formidable wild beasts of the jungle.

By startled ejaculations behind him he knew that Mark and Jack had grasped the danger of the situation.

"Get out of here, fellows," urged Ted in a low tone. "You can't be too quick."

"We won't go without you, Ted," cried Mark Lawson.

"I'm coming," Ted gritted through his teeth, "but you fellows have got to get out of my way first."

The argument had its effect, and by the slipping of a stone and the scuffle of feet behind him Ted knew that his comrades were retreating cautiously.

An urgent hand was laid on his arm.

"Come on, Ted," whispered Walter. "The brute is beginning to move."

CHAPTER XVII

The Jaguar Springs

Ted Scott had already detected that the animal in the cave, whatever it was, was no longer quiescent. The green points of light glowed appreciably nearer than before.

"Get back, Walter," murmured Ted. "I'll follow you, but slowly. Any sudden movement will bring the beast upon us."

Ted's hand crept toward the revolver at his belt and slowly drew it out. How he longed for a rifle. He bitterly berated himself for not having brought one along.

His only other weapon was a long and keen machete with almost a razor edge.

Unhurried, though his impulse was to move quickly, Ted backed foot by foot toward the mouth of the cave. Once out in the open, his chances would be better. Then, too, his comrades could help. As things were now they could do nothing without endangering him.

His eyes never left those of his enemy. He put every ounce of his will into one unswerving

stare in the hope of daunting his antagonist, or at least deferring the attack.

He might have succeeded in this had he not just then stepped on a slimy patch of moss near the entrance that made him stagger and throw up his arms to maintain his balance.

That action broke the spell that had held the beast in check. With a hideous roar the animal sprang.

But blended with the roar was the report of Ted's revolver which, with the quickness of lightning, he had raised and fired.

Ted Scott had trained his mind and muscles to act together. It was this perfect coördination of thought and action that moved him now.

The flash and the bullet, one or both, somewhat disconcerted the beast and marred the accuracy of its spring. In addition, Ted had sprung to one side as soon as he had fired. So he escaped the full impact of the animal's body. But one of the whirling paws struck him in the side and knocked him to the ground.

The revolver was knocked out of his hand and sent to such a distance that it was impossible for him to regain it.

The beast had overshot its mark, but it turned at once and made for Ted, who had drawn the machete from its sheath and had lifted himself to one knee.

The next instant the brute was upon him and

knocked him over on his back. Sharp claws ripped through the leather of his flying jacket. The frightful, savage jaws reached for his throat.

With all the strength of his muscular arm, Ted drove the sharp blade of the machete deep into the animal's throat.

The beast gave back, pulling the knife out of Ted's hand. Then it reared on its hind legs, tearing furiously at the deeply imbedded weapon.

Ted availed himself of the respite to wriggle over to his revolver. He grabbed it and fired point-blank into the open jaws, and the bullet sped into the brain.

The great brute rolled over and over, then stretched out and lay still.

Ted rose to his knees. The smell of the blood with which he was covered made his head reel. He wiped his face with the sleeve of his jacket and stumbled past the motionless body of his enemy.

All this had taken place in less than a minute. When he reached the entrance, he met his comrades rushing in with drawn revolvers. But the need for these had passed.

They caught hold of Ted and pulled him out into the open. His clothes were smeared and his face was covered with the blood that had spurted from the animal's throat.

Ted knew that he was not a pleasant sight, but he had no idea how gory he looked until he saw the startled faces of his friends. He hastened to reassure them.

"That isn't my blood," he explained. "It's the jaguar's, or at least most of it is. I may have some scratches, but nothing serious. He's torn my jacket to shreds, though. Lucky it was leather."

A careful examination showed some scratches on the arm that Hapworth washed with a disinfectant and bandaged. Then they entered the cave and dragged the body of the jaguar, as it proved to be, into the open where they could see it better. It was a magnificent specimen and they gazed on it with wonder.

"It was a wonderful fight you put up, Ted," said Walter Hapworth. "That brain of yours works like lightning. One false move, one slow move, and you'd have been done for. And as for nerve—well, that great body tells the story."

"You ought to take the brute's skin home for a trophy, Ted," suggested Mark.

"I don't want any reminder of that fight," replied Ted. "I saw all I wanted of that old boy when he was reaching for my throat. The quicker I forget it the better I'll be pleased."

In an hour or so the rain abated and they all set to work on the machine. They found

that the hurricane had made a good deal of repairing necessary before they would again be justified in taking to the air, and before they had got it in perfect shape darkness was about to settle down on the jungle.

"Looks as though our flying were done for the day," remarked Hapworth.

"I'm afraid so," agreed Ted. "This is a case where there's no use flying at night, for we couldn't see anything below us and we might pass over some of the landmarks that we have in mind. We'll have to make the best of it and start early in the morning."

Hot as the jungle is in the daytime, in the night it is often too cool for comfort. As the dusk fell, a cold wind swept over the plateau where the searchers found themselves. In their drenched clothing the aviators shivered.

"We've got to have a fire," declared Ted. "I don't want any of us to get down with jungle fever."

"Where are we going to get the material?" asked Jack.

The sodden jungle held out small encouragement. But by hunting here and there where fallen trees and overhanging rocks had offered some kind of protection against the rain, they found a supply of brush and branches that offered some promise.

"The stuff is damp, but with a little encouragement I think we can get it to burn," observed Ted.

For the location of their fire they chose a broad overhang of rock that formed a sort of canopy. To this site they brought cushions and provisions from the plane.

The wood did not burn readily and had to be nursed along. But in time it gained a certain body and power and sent forth a crackling warmth that the chilled adventurers found exceedingly comforting.

They opened tins of beef and salmon and ate hungrily. It was the first meal they had had since morning and they ate with relish. Plenty of hot coffee put the finishing touch to their contentment.

Darkness had settled definitely upon the jungle. The heart of it was black and menacing. From somewhere in its depths came a bloodcurdling cry as some unfortunate forest dweller became the prey of a prowling beast.

Mark Lawson stirred uneasily, rose and put more wood upon the fire.

"What's the matter, Mark?" asked Walter Hapworth, with a smile. "Getting nervous?"

CHAPTER XVIII

Drawing Closer

"Not especially," replied Mark Lawson to Walter Hapworth's chaffing question. "But that death cry out in the jungle suggests that some of the four-footed pirates round here might like to make a change in their diet and take a hack at us."

"Quite within the possibilities," agreed Ted. "There may be some two-footed ones about, too, that might prove more dangerous to our peace of mind—and body—than even the wild beasts."

"The fire may attract them, too," suggested Jack. "Don't you think you'd better douse it?"

"Not yet," protested Mark. "I'm just beginning to get dried out."

"I think we'd better keep it up," said Ted. "It will be a certain protection against animals, if we make it big enough. As for Indians, I imagine that after this terrific wind and rain they're hugging their wigwams pretty tight.

We haven't caught a glimpse of any of them around this neck of the woods."

He picked up a heap of brush to throw it on the fire.

"This looks as though it had already been partly burned," he remarked. "And what is this? Ugh!"

With a gesture of repulsion he dropped something long and white.

Hapworth stooped and picked it up, regarding it curiously.

"Why, it's a bone!" he exclaimed, handling it gingerly. "What's more, it's a human bone. The thigh bone of a full grown man, if I'm any judge. Who brought in this pile of brush?"

"I did," replied Jack. "When we were hunting about for fuel I came across a whole lot of this stuff that seemed already to have been partly charred. I thought it would be all the better for that and brought it along. Looked as though there had been a fire in this part of the jungle. But I didn't notice that bone at the time. Just gathered armfuls of the stuff and brought them in. Let's see if there are any more of those grisly things."

He poked around in the mass and found several more human bones of various sizes.

"Fire! Bones!" exclaimed Ted, as a thought struck him. "Say, fellows, do you remember

what Murano told us we'd come across on our way to the village of Durondo?"

"A native village that had been burned and every one of the people in it killed," replied Hapworth excitedly. "Jove, Ted, if this is the place, that hurricane was a blessing in disguise! It's brought us to a place that we might not have found in a week of searching."

"Of course it may not be the same place he had in mind," said Ted musingly. "I suppose many fires and massacres have occurred in the jungle. But this certainly fits the description. You know he said the village was near a wall of rock. We'll examine the place carefully the first thing in the morning."

"It gives me something of a jolt to sleep with heaps of bones close at hand," remarked Mark, with a grimace.

"It isn't the pleasantest idea in the world," assented Hapworth. "Still, after all, dead jungle dwellers are less dangerous than live ones might prove to be."

They were intensely weary after the excitement of the day, and after arranging shifts to keep guard through the night, they stretched themselves out in their blankets and slept soundly.

Nothing untoward happened through the night and they woke to a beautiful day, with

the sun shining brightly and the air made cool and sweet by the rain of the day before.

They dispatched a hasty breakfast and then set out to make a reconnaissance of the neighborhood.

They had not gone far before their conjectures of the night before were fully confirmed. There was abundant evidence of tragedy in the charred remains of huts and trees that dotted a wide clearing and in the melancholy remnants of human bones, of which there were many. They could not traverse the expanse without a shudder.

"There's one peculiar thing," observed Ted, after a while. "That is, that although there are plenty of bones, there are no skulls so far as I've seen."

"I was thinking of that," rejoined Mark. "I haven't come across one of them."

"Pretty good proof of the kind of people the raiders were," observed Hapworth.

"You mean that they were head-hunters?" queried Ted.

"Exactly. They took away every head, just as our North American Indians carry off the scalps of their enemies. Nice, pleasant creatures, aren't they?"

Into the minds of all came the thought of Hamilton Larue and Dayton Jarvis. Their heads——

The thought stirred the rescue party to action.

"Time to move on, fellows," said Ted briskly. "Walter, suppose you get out your instruments and take observations so that we may know just where we are. Mark, you and Jack pile up the blankets and cooking utensils and store them in the plane. While you're doing that I'll take a little scout around and see if I can find some water. I think I hear the sound of a brook a little way off and I notice that our tanks need replenishing. This is as good a time as any to fill up."

The young aviator's companions set about following his directions, while he made his way in the direction of the running water.

There were a number of trails in the vicinity, probably made long ago by the unfortunate villagers, and he chose the one that seemed the most used on the probability that that would lead him to the stream of which he was in quest.

The storm of the day before had washed the foliage clear of dust and the leaves were vivid with various shades of green. Trees and bushes of fantastic shapes and varied foliage vied for his attention as he strode along. There was a constant murmurous rustle overhead, as though a steady wind soughed through the treetops.

The sound mystified Ted, for he knew there was no wind. The day was absolutely still,

with not a breath stirring. There was not breeze enough to cause a single leaf to rustle.

Was it really wind? Or was he confounding the sound with the murmur of the brook which constantly grew louder?

An excited chatter broke out overhead.

As Ted looked up, startled, something dropped from a smother of greenery and landed on his shoulders.

Two hairy arms wound themselves about his neck!

They were no human arms. They were hairy and slight, but very strong. They clung with a strangling grip. It was all Ted could do to free himself from that tenacious hold.

By a vigorous jerk he wrenched one of the hairy arms loose and swung its owner around in front of him.

He found himself staring into a pair of bright, mischievous eyes.

"It's a baby monkey, as sure as I live!" exclaimed Ted delightedly. "A cute little beast. Wonder how it got here? Must have missed his grip on a bough and tumbled down."

The little monkey began to jabber excitedly. It tried to break away from its captor, but Ted held it, shielding himself with his leather-sleeved arms from the attack of its small, sharp teeth.

"We need a mascot," Ted said to himself.

"Guess I'll take you back to camp with me. The fellows will enjoy watching your antics, you mischievous young imp."

He was aware once more of that rustling murmur overhead. Only now it was much augmented. It swelled in volume until all other noises of the jungle were blotted out. Even the shrill screeching of the parrots were lost in the hubbub.

Ted looked up and saw a strange sight. It was as though myriad windows had been opened in the dense foliage of the trees, and through these windows peered faces, some merely curious, others threatening.

So human were the emotions on the various faces that Ted was at first startled by the thought that they might belong to some of the hairy tribesmen that infested the jungle. The situation was so dreamlike that he was not conscious much of fear; only of intense curiosity.

Abruptly, a body belonging to one of the faces swung down from the branch of a tree, hanging by one long hairy arm. At the same time the jabbering from the creature's comrades increased in volume.

Ted looked from the tiny creature struggling in his grasp to the big monkey above and instantly grasped the situation.

"I'll bet this little beast is her baby," he mut-

tered. "She wants it back and has summoned all the tribe to help her get it. Well, here's where I lose a mascot."

He set the baby monkey on the ground. It snarled at him, drawing its lips back from sharp white teeth. Then with a lightning-like movement it darted up the trunk of a tree, leaped for a branch, caught it, and swung itself along until it reached its mother.

The latter received it eagerly, whimpering and scolding, feeling its little body all over with one free hand as though to make sure that it had received no injury from its escapade. Then she swung herself upward, the little one clasping its arms tightly about her neck, and was swallowed up in the sea of leaves.

The windows in the foliage closed up and the leafy screen formed almost a solid canopy overhead. But the jabbering went on, louder than ever.

"There must be hundreds of them up there," thought Ted uneasily. "They could make things pretty warm for me, if they took the notion."

To be followed by a tenacious and unseen enemy was a trying experience. Ted Scott knew that the monkeys when enraged and in great numbers were formidable enemies. He was alone and they were many.

The invisible pursuit persisted. Now and

then a hairy body would swing low above Ted's head, jabbering threats. Once a hand just grazed his shoulder. The invisible pursuit was becoming visible.

Then there came a change in the nature of the sounds overhead. The branches swayed as though bent by a stiff gale. Great castana nuts, as big as a man's head, began to fall about Ted. The monkeys were pelting him with missiles which, if they struck squarely, might easily fracture his skull.

A little to Ted's right was a small clearing denuded of trees. He ran toward it, covering his head with his hands to ward off the deadly rain. He reached it and breathed more freely. But his respite was of short duration.

A dozen or more of the monkeys were dropping from the trees and advancing toward him!

CHAPTER XIX

The Boa Constrictor Strikes

The first dozen or more monkeys were swiftly followed by others until there were hundreds in the threatening band. There was a fierce jabbering as they ranged themselves about Ted Scott. Then they began to move forward, not in a wild charge, but slowly, as relentlessly as fate.

If they once closed on him, Ted feared that the angry creatures would not allow him to escape alive.

He unslung his rifle and took careful aim at the leader.

But the rifle never spoke.

From a branch directly above the leader of the sinister procession shot what looked like a coil of thick black rope. With the quickness of lightning it wound itself about the foremost of the advancing horde.

There was a wild shriek from the doomed beast and it flung itself about frantically, try-

ing to release itself from the crushing folds of the boa constrictor.

The other monkeys vanished like magic with yells of fright.

Ted, pale and shaken to the depths, watched the struggle going on, scarcely daring to believe in his deliverance from a certain and terrible death. He lowered his rifle and watched with fascinated horror the tragedy being enacted before his eyes.

It was of brief duration. The folds of the great snake grew tighter and tighter and the bones of the trapped beast cracked under the strain.

At that moment a shot rang out, followed by two others. Ted knew that they came from the rifles of his companions, grown uneasy over his prolonged absence. He fired an aswering shot in return and a moment later Walter Hapworth, Jack and Mark broke through the bushes.

"Why—what—" stammered Hapworth, and then the group stood appalled at the sight before them.

The boa constrictor had thrown its coils off the body of its victim which now lay on the ground a crushed and shapeless mass. The victor itself had not come through unscathed, for the sharp teeth of the monkey had torn

strips from the scaly skin before yielding up its life.

But the injuries did not seem to be serious and the great reptile unloosed its tail from the bough above and prepared to feast upon its victim.

Then for the first time it became conscious of the group of spectators. It raised its head with a horrid hiss and surveyed them menacingly.

"Here's where we come in!" exclaimed Ted, as he threw his rifle to his shoulder. "All together, fellows! Aim at the head and neck."

Four shots rang out as one and every bullet found its mark. The reptile's head was shattered. The long body beat the ground with blows that seemed like the booming of a drum. A red spray spattered so near the marksmen that they had to jump to avoid being splashed by it.

At last the flounderng ceased and the long body straightened out. The group waited a few minutes longer and then approached with caution. But none was needed.

"Gee, what a monster!" exclaimed Hapworth, as his eyes measured the reptile's length. "Twenty feet at least. More nearly twenty-five."

"Seems rather a shabby trick on our part to kill it," observed Ted, "because after all it

probably saved my life." And he narrated to his breathless listeners the peril in which he had stood from the angry monkeys.

"The snake was sure Johnny on the spot," observed Mark; "but don't let it worry you, Ted—about killing him. He'd have grabbed you just as quickly as he grabbed the monkey if he had had the chance."

They resumed their search for the brook and within a few minutes were on its banks. The water was clear and cool and they drank their fill. Then they secured vessels from the plane and, working quickly, soon replenished their water supply.

This having been attended to, Ted discussed with Walter Hapworth the calculations the latter had been making while Ted had been searching for the brook.

"I guess we've got our bearings now, all right," said the young aviator, as he pulled on his gloves and stepped into the plane, followed by his comrades. "This burned village is the first landmark. The volcano will be the next. When we find that we'll be hot on the trail. Let's go."

He settled himself in the pilot's seat. It was good to feel of the stick again.

The motors roared and the *Rescue* zoomed up into the skies.

Up here was safety, peace. Gratefully, Ted

Scott lifted his face to the rush of the wind. The "eagle" was in his element!

Now and then Ted ascended to higher altitudes where a broad view of the surrounding country could be obtained. But in general he flew low, searching for the Trail of the Yellow Death.

Many jungle trails they saw and followed only to find that they led to nothing that gave them a clew. The shadows of afternoon were lengthening and Ted had begun to think that they must call the day a total loss when Walter Hapworth touched him on the shoulder to attract his attention and pointed with his hand in an easterly direction.

"Take up your glasses and look over there," Hapworth said.

Ted did so and after a moment he saw it—saw a thin line of smoke streaming upward to join a cloudlike pall that swirled and eddied in the wind.

The discovery was a tonic to Ted. He shouted with glee and headed the plane straight for that telltale ribbon of smoke.

Guarding against disappointment, Ted told himself that the smoke might have various explanations, the fires of some Indian village, for instance. However, his reason told him that no ordinary fire would form such a smoke cloud as he had seen through his glasses.

The great plane skimmed the air like a swallow. Ted did not check her speed until she had almost reached the slender column of smoke. Then he pulled the stick and the *Rescue* shot upward.

The move was made not a minute too soon. A gust of wind brought with it a whiff of acrid vapor. Ted's eyes were filled with it and the pain was so great that he was momentarily blinded; his throat ached from the effect of the noxious gas; wracking coughs shook him.

Another thousand feet of altitude and the vapor had been dissipated. Sight and breathing were once more normal.

He made a wide circle until he was outside the atmosphere of danger and then gradually came lower to discover the source of the smoke. This was difficult in the hazy conditions, but at last he saw something that made his heart leap.

Above the stunted vegetation that had been all but destroyed by the poisonous fumes, a blackened, cone-shaped mountain reared itself, its jagged sides caked with layer after layer of dried lava. From the depressed mouth of the cone came the column of smoke that had guided him to the spot.

The volcano, Kimoree!

Ted was jubilant. One more landmark found! One more stage passed on their long quest!

"We're getting there, fellows!" he shouted exultantly.

"Looks like it," replied Walter joyously.

"Score another one for Murano!" exclaimed Mark.

"The old boy gave us the right steer," declared Jack.

But now it was time to look for a landing place. The lengthening shadows were giving the young airman concern, for he knew that the jungle night, when it came, would shut down suddenly like the snap of a penknife blade. He hated to descend, but must was a hard master.

He scanned carefully the ground beneath. He wanted to stay in the vicinity of the volcano so that he could direct his course from it on the following morning.

Through his glasses he could see the wide, barren plateau about the base of the mountain. Burned free from most vegetation, it would not present any special obstacle to the take-off of the plane.

As a precaution, Ted tied a handkerchief about his mouth and nose to offer some protection from the dangerous vapors and his companions followed his example.

Cautiously he guided the big plane, flying her low, muting her engines to a droning hum.

He was circling the mountain for a third time, looking anxiously for a suitable spot to

land, when he felt a hand grip his shoulder. Hapworth pointed excitedly toward a clump of stunted trees that grew on the edge of the plateau.

A glance told Ted that there beneath him was being played out a drama of life and death.

Out on the topmost branch of one of the trees the figure of a man crawled laboriously. Up the trunk of the same tree crept another living creature, a tawny, slinking beast whose sinuous grace marked it as one of the great jungle cats.

Ted nodded his head as a sign that he understood and would go to the aid of the helpless native.

He brought the plane down as low as he dared and headed in the direction of the tree. At the same time he motioned to Hapworth to open up the store of bombs that they had brought with them to use in case of an emergency.

The emergency was here!

Hapworth picked up a bomb and held it poised.

Ted brought the plane drectly above the tree and held it there hovering.

"Now!" cried Ted.

CHAPTER XX

Blown to Fragments

Clinging to a high branch of the stunted tree on the edge of the barren plateau, the Indian, Muri, found himself hard pressed.

The jaguar, with eyes like the great green jewels set in the eye sockets of the goddess, Pu, crept slowly up the gnarled and twisted trunk of the tree. The sharp, cruel teeth showed and the tail twitched nervously in anticipation of a feast. The unblinking eyes were fixed upon the intended victim.

In his terror, Muri moved out farther along the branch of the tree until it bent and creaked beneath his weight.

The jaguar reached the bough and began to crawl out upon it.

What should Muri do? He knew that he could not remain where he was without being gripped by the death-dealing claws of the dreaded brute.

He could drop to the ground. But the jaguar would drop also.

Muri wept. He screamed in his terror. He could feel those rending claws in his shrinking flesh, those dreadful teeth tearing at his throat.

Farther out upon the branch crept the jaguar. Muri prayed to the goddess Pu to deliver him from an awful death. Only a miracle could save him now.

Suddenly the shadow of a great bird was flung across the tree. A roaring like that of a cataract was in the ears of Muri. Terror clutched his soul with redoubled force. What was this new enemy that had come to hunt him down?

The jaguar heard the roaring of the great bird, too. He paused, crouching close to the branch, his wicked eyes uplifted, his teeth bared in a vicious snarl.

Out of the heavens came something as swift and deadly as a bolt of lightning. There was a burst of flame. Something struck the tawny body of the jaguar, and the jaguar was no more!

The impact hurled Muri from the tree. In falling he struck his head upon a rock and lay stretched out on the ground as motionless as death. A few feet away from him lay what was left of the mangled body of the jaguar.

Meanwhile the swift-winged bird with a song like the voice of a cataract circled about the

plateau, sank lower and lower until the wheels touched the slaty ground.

The plane ran along for several hundred feet and came to a stop almost within a stone's throw of the place where the bodies of man and beast were lying.

Stiffly, the four occupants of the great machine climbed out to the ground. They went over to the motionless Indian and Mark Lawson touched him gently with his foot.

"Looks as dead as a doornail," commented Jack Forrest. "Maybe the bomb got him, too."

Ted knelt down beside the man and placed his hand over his heart.

"Old pump still working," he reported cheerfully. "Give him time and he'll come around all right."

"Which is more than you can say for the jaguar," remarked Hapworth. "The bomb found its mark, anyway."

"Good shot," commented Jack.

"More good luck than anything else," said Hapworth.

They carried the Indian back into the shelter of the trees. Ted rolled up his jacket for a pillow and placed it beneath the man's head. They did what they could for him, and when he returned to consciousness Walter Hapworth told him briefly what had occurred. Then, after

giving him a light stimulant from their medical stores, they left him to rest.

"He'll probably be himself in a few minutes," commented Mark. "Got a bump on his head as big as a robin's egg, though."

"Now that we're here, how about chow?" asked Jack. "I'm fearfully hungry."

The aviators set about getting out beans and biscuits and preparing a fire on which to boil coffee, and meanwhile discussed the new elements in the situation.

"If this is the volcano, Kimoree, spoken of by that native back in the settlement, it looks as though we were hard on the Trail of the Yellow Death," observed Jack Forrest.

"Looks that way to me," agreed Ted. He helped himself to a biscuit and munched it thoughtfully. "With luck we may soon find ourselves at Durondo's camp, and soon after that, if our luck holds, we may be speeding back to civilization with Mr. Larue and Professor Jarvis in the cabin of the plane."

"Sounds good to me," said Mark. "Just between us I'm getting a bit fed up with the suspense."

Walter Hapworth reached for a cup of coffee, and as he did so, it seemed to him that the earth rose up beneath him. It subsided with a peculiar rolling motion, and Walter sank back

against a tree with a bewildered look that was almost comical. The coffee cup had turned in his hand, spilling its contents upon the ground. He glanced at his companions and saw on their faces the same startled expression that he knew must be upon his own.

Ted Scott rose slowly to his knees. He stared questioningly at the huge, black-faced mountain from whose top smoke was coming in increasing volume.

"Now may the goddess Pu save us all from a terrible death!"

The words, spoken softly and ending in a shrill whisper, made them all face about sharply.

The Indian, Muri, had raised himself on his elbow. His dark face was overspread by a grayish pallor. His eyes were fixed in terror upon the frowning bulk of the volcano.

"It is the evil spirit, Koro, that dwells in the heart of Kimoree," stated Muri, still in that strange, shrill whisper. "From his mouth he spits forth fire; in his heart is death!"

Ted Scott broke the spell woven about them by the words of the Indian.

"Nonsense!" he said sharply. "There are no evil spirits. That is simply a hill of stone that now seems to be coming to life after a long sleep."

"For long years Koro, the evil spirit, has

slumbered in the heart of the burning mountain," droned the Indian. He had raised himself to his knees and, with a shaking finger, pointed upward.

The shadows of night had now fallen heavily upon the jungle. Above the crater the skies were lit with a crimson glow; a flush that brightened, dimmed, and brightened again.

"See," mumbled the Indian, shaking as with an ague. "It is fire from the heart of Koro, the evil one——"

Again the earth writhed in a sickening convulsion. Ted was thrown forward to his knees. A sharp, rending crash drowned the scream of the Indian. A tree, uprooted bodily, tumbled forward, groaning like a thing in torment.

"The plane!" shouted Ted, springing to his feet. "Look! The tree has fallen across the plane!"

They rushed into the open, forgetful of everything else in their anxiety for the plane. Luckily, it had not been struck by the trunk of the tree, or it would inevitably have been crushed. But the tree had fallen in such a way that its upper branches rested on the machine, while the trunk blocked its way into the open plateau beyond. It was pinned into the narrow space between the fallen tree and the patch of woodland.

"Get out the axes, fellows!" commanded

Ted. "We've got to clear away these branches and get the trunk out of the way."

In anticipation of a possible emergency, several sharp axes had been loaded on the plane at the same time that it had been refueled. These were got out and the members of the party began to hack away feverishly at the imprisoning branches.

But the tree was of some hardwood variety and the close-grained, tough branches were desperately hard to cut through; so despite all their efforts the work was heartbreakingly slow.

Meanwhile the night grew blacker; the flame from the crater of Kimoree was etched sharply against the inky sky. The ground trembled and writhed in the grip of repeated quakes, each more severe than the last. Several times the workers were thrown from their feet.

On one such occasion, Walter Hapworth lost his ax. It fell from his hand and was lost in the dark line of the trees. He crawled on hands and knees to recover it.

A hand touched his and he drew back with a startled exclamation.

"It is I, Muri," came the voice of the native. "Here is your ax."

With a muttered word of thanks Walter seized the ax and started back to the plane. The man caught his arm, detaining him.

"Muri is going," said the Indian. "He is flying from the wrath of Koro, the evil one. But the white men have saved the life of Muri; in return he says to you that death is here in many forms. If the white men wish to live, they must fly."

Walter laughed a little grimly.

"We would fly, friend," he said, "but our bird's wings are useless."

As he rejoined the others an arrow whistled past his ear.

CHAPTER XXI

Singing Arrows

Another arrow followed the first and then another. Muri's warning had been justified. Death was about in many forms!

Mark Lawson ducked behind the plane, shouting to his companions to do likewise.

"We're being taken for targets, fellows!" he cried. "Down behind the plane!"

In a flash, Ted Scott had grasped the situation. He snatched up the rifle, which since his adventure with the jaguar in the cave he had kept always at hand.

"Grab your rifles, fellows, and use the plane for cover," he shouted.

"It looks like a big night, Ted," panted Walter Hapworth, as he crouched at his friend's side.

"It sure does," agreed Ted. "But we'll give these fellows a taste of their own medicine."

As though in defiance of this threat, a score of arrows showered about the plane. A fiend-

ish shout was followed by a rush of savages from the shelter of the trees.

A fusillade of shots from behind the plane halted the impetuous charge of the Indians. Two of them staggered and fell. A third dropped his spear with a yell and grasped his arm from which the blood dripped.

The attackers drew back to the covert of the patch of woodland, leaving their wounded where they had fallen.

By this time the fire from the lip of Kimoree had grown so bright that the entire region about the volcanic region was suffused with a brilliant glow.

Objects stood out sharply in the weird illumination. Trees assumed the bent and twisted shapes of crouching demons. The vegetation, the boulders and the bushes were made of nightmare stuff.

The besieged aviators crouched behind the plane, awaiting what they were sure would be a renewal of the attack. How many their assailants were, they had no means of knowing. A score at least and perhaps more. They felt that they were keeping what might be their "rendezvous with death."

They had not long to wait.

Once more the savages rushed forth with frightful yells, only to be met by a destructive volley from the rifles. This time the aviators

were prepared. There was a grim purpose behind the steady aim, the resolute finger on the trigger.

Again the Indians fell back before that deadly rain, leaving more of their number stretched upon the ground.

It seemed as if they were bewildered by the strangers' guns, weapons from whose mouths came fire like that from the crater, Kimoree. Possibly they had never come in contact with rifles before. At any rate, they were plainly daunted.

Behind the plane that protected them Ted Scott and his comrades crouched and waited.

The ground was shaken by increasing tremors, the severity of which argued an increased activity on the part of the volcano. The lava-caked ground was growing hot under foot.

The young rescuers shifted their positions uneasily. The motion of the ground filled them with a faint nausea like the beginning of seasickness. Sweat began to pour from their bodies.

"We've got to get clear of this, fellows," said Ted, after a long interval. "Maybe we've scared the savages off for good. Even if we haven't, we've got to take some chances. If that volcano ever starts erupting in dead

earnest, we're goners. We've got to get up in the air."

"And mighty quick too," said Hapworth, as he glanced at the crimson head of Kimoree.

"Jack," said Ted, "you keep your rifle and send frequent shots into the woods so as to let those fellows know that we're strictly on the job and any more rushes will be unhealthy. The rest of us will try to clear away this infernal tree."

Jack Forrest did as directed and the rest hacked away with their axes, keeping all the time a sharp lookout for the enemy.

Whether the savages had definitely withdrawn or were simply waiting for an opportune moment to renew their attack, the aviators did not know. The fact remained that they were permitted to finish the work of releasing the plane without further interference from the invisible enemy.

They worked desperately. The heat by this time was almost unbearable. Their clothing was drenched with perspiration and clung to them limply. Gaseous vapors filled the air and oppressed their lungs so that they breathed gaspingly.

When the last imprisoning branch had been cut away and enough of the trunk removed to allow free egress for the plane they gave an

exultant shout that came forth from their parched throats in a hoarse croak.

"All aboard, fellows!" ordered Ted, "Snappy does it!"

He started the propeller whirling. The roar of the engine was the sweetest music in their ears. The steady thrum of it was a pæan of triumph.

As the *Rescue* moved forward, its wheels bumping over the rocky ground, the savages began to pour out from the shelter of the surrounding forest.

Enraged by the sight of the stiff-winged bird, through whose magic agency their intended victims were making their escape, they rushed after the plane, yelling like demons.

Clouds of arrows fell about the airmen, but they were crouched low in their seats and the gallant plane gathered speed quickly. The wheels lifted from the ground and the *Rescue* took the air most gallantly.

Up she went and up, clearing the jungle and darting at last like an arrow of silver into the sky, far out of range of the missiles shot by the maddened horde below.

Safe!

On through the dark night, leaving the nightmare of heat and horror far behind; on into the blackness until Kimoree was only a dying flush upon the clouds.

But they had not abandoned it permanently. The volcano was an important landmark on their way to the Trail of the Yellow Death and the village of Durondo. Ted proposed to use it as a central point from which to start on the last lap of the search for Hamilton Larue and Dayton Jarvis.

So he cruised about the skies until dawn began to break. All of the party took shifts at the controls while the others snatched some hours of sleep.

Shortly after daybreak they retraced their path through the skies until they were once more in the vicinity of Kimoree. It seemed to be strangely subdued. The fires that had flared up in the heart of the mountain had subsided again. Only a slim ribbon of smoke made its way upward from the crater.

Ted set his course as well as he could with the mountain as his point of departure and flew in the direction that he thought promised the best results. But the morning hours passed fruitlessly.

In the early afternoon, however, they saw something that sent a thrill through their veins. A great cataract came into view, a sparkling torrent dashing from a great height with a deafening roar into the waters of a fast-flowing river.

Dropping low, the flyers could see the rush

and swirl of its passage, could guess of the song the river sang as it flowed on swiftly between banks of heavy vegetation.

"Where the cataract and the Roaring River meet!" cried Ted, in uncontrollable exultation, repeating the words of his native informant.

"Hit it sure, or I miss my guess!" exclaimed Hapworth.

"On the right trail at last!" jubilated Mark.

"I think we're reaching the last lap of our journey," declared Ted. "From now on our work is going to be just as dangerous as playing with rattlesnakes. I imagine the home of the head-hunters can't be very far away. You fellows keep your field glasses glued to your eyes. Look for men. Look for villages. And above all look for some jungle trail that we can follow as a guide."

"There are so many of them," remarked Jack doubtfully.

"No doubt," replied Ted. "But there must be one that is broader and more hard-beaten than any other, one that the tribe uses habitually, one so plain that it fairly hits you in the face. And, above all, one that is bordered by yellow flowers. Find that and you'll have the Trail of the Yellow Death."

It was an ominous name, and seemed far more so now than it had when they had first heard it in the village of Alega.

Confident that he must be somewhere in the vicinity of that sinister path, Ted cruised about slowly in ever widening circles, while his companions scanned the ground intently.

At last an exclamation came from Hapworth.

"Can you go a little lower, Ted?" he asked. "I fancy I've made out something."

Ted pushed the stick and the plane sank nearer to the ground.

"That's enough!" cried Hapworth. "I was right. See those big yellow flowers extending on a long line through the jungle? We've hit it, fellows. The Trail of the Yellow Death!"

CHAPTER XXII

The Poison Flowers

There was a chorus of exclamations from the party as his companions realized what was meant by Walter Hapworth's declaration.

"At last!" jubilated Ted.

"Close on their heels now!" chuckled Mark.

"All we have to do is to follow that trail and we'll get there!" exulted Jack.

"Murano's been right in so many things that I can guess he hasn't failed us here," pronounced Hapworth. "We can't be far from the maloca of Durondo."

"That line of yellow ought to be easy to follow," declared Ted. "I'll bring the plane down just as low as I dare and we'll make the trail our guide."

He suited the action to the word and brought the *Rescue* to a level not more than two hundred feet above the tops of the tallest trees.

There was such a profusion of the sinister blooms that they made what seemed like a great yellow daub of paint on the landscape.

The ground on which they grew was marshy, but between the lines of flowers was what appeared to be a hard-beaten path.

Along that path, Ted thought with a thrill, had doubtless passed Hamilton Larue and Dayton Jarvis. Where were they now? Were they still in the land of the living? Were they being held for ransom? Or—and his blood chilled at the thought—were their heads on the ridgepole of Durondo's wigwam?

One other thing. On this terrible march to the tribal home of the savages, had Mr. Larue and Professor Jarvis been able to carry out the plan they had discussed with their companions long before they had fallen into the hands of the head-hunters?

For Allen had told Ted in the village of Alega that the explorers had anticipated the possibility of capture on their perilous expedition. It had been agreed that, if any should be taken prisoner while others escaped, the captive or captives would try to leave some signal on the line of march that would aid any party that might come to their rescue. It might be a handkerchief fastened to a bush—a bit of torn clothing—a memorandum book—anything which would indicate that men from the outside world had passed that way.

It was a forlorn hope, and Ted knew it. The chances were all against the prisoners being

able to do anything of the kind without attracting the attention of their captors.

Still, it was a possibility, and Ted recalled it now to the minds of his companions and urged them to scan every foot of the territory they were passing over to see if they could detect any such signal.

He had put the silencer on the plane so that the roar of the engine had subsided to a droning hum. If he were nearing the village of the head-hunters, he did not want to give warning in advance of his coming. He must count as far as possible on surprise.

He had slowed down the plane so that he was scarcely more than drifting. He did not want to pass along the trail too swiftly for fear that his comrades might overlook some signal left by the prisoners.

Then he became conscious that he was very tired. Every muscle of his body seemed to feel the need of relaxation. He wanted to lie down on a soft bed and sleep. Better yet on a cloud. No bed could be as soft as that. To float away on a cloud—to float and float, with no one to call him, no one to wake him up!

He pulled himself together with a start. What was making him feel that way? He never had before. Oh yes, he had once—that time, that time—when was it? Funny he couldn't remember—yes, it was when he had drunk that

doped coffee. Who had given it to him? Well, never mind, it didn't matter, anyway—it was a long time ago—a long time—a long—a——

His senses were slipping. His mind wandered. His eyes were dimmed. He tried to rub them clear, but he could not lift his hand. Queer, how heavy it felt. He was weighted with lead, all of him. Then abruptly the weight dropped away and he was buoyant, as light as air. It must be he had found that cloud. How delicious to float, float——

Ted Scott came back to consciousness with a sudden shock as though ice water had been dashed in his face.

The first thing that struck him was that he was seated at a most peculiar angle. His feet were braced against the forepart of the plane and he could look straight down. It was more like standing than sitting.

Then he woke to the reason. The plane had swung into a nose dive! It was headed for earth at an appalling rate. It was the rush of air that had revived him.

A quick adjustment, a pull on the stick, and the downward dive was checked. But it could not be overcome at once. A smother of green rushed up to meet him. Would the plane plunge into the tree tops despite all that he could do?

The young aviator set his teeth and pleaded with the plane.

"Come on, beauty," he urged. "Let's get together and cheat those trees. We can do it. Straighten out there. That's right. We'll make it! Up you go! Up—up——"

Gradually the plane righted; its nose came up and it swept along over the tops of the trees, fairly grazing them as it rushed by.

Ted Scott relaxed. A great sigh exploded from his lungs as he lifted the plane a thousand feet higher and then sank back into his seat. His head still reeled from the effects of the noxious fumes. But he was content. The plane had come through.

He glanced at his companions. They, like himself, had been partly stupefied, but were now coming to themselves.

"Wake up, you fellows!" Ted shouted at them.

"Wh-what has happened?" stammered Hapworth.

"Plenty," returned Ted. "That Trail of the Yellow Death nearly got the best of us. We were flying too close and the scent coming up from those poison flowers drugged us. Gee, but it was a close call. When I woke up the plane was taking a nose dive, and there wasn't room for a thin dime between it and the top of the trees when I finally swung it up. A little more and we'd have been goners."

"Who'd have thought it would have affected us at such a height?" said Mark.

"They must be mighty powerful," replied Ted. "Then, too, there's no wind to-day to scatter the fumes and they mounted straight up into the air."

"No wonder that old Durondo and his head-hunters rely on them to knock out any pursuers," observed Jack.

"That rather puts a spoke in our wheel, doesn't it?" asked Hapworth. "If we don't keep pretty close to the ground, we can't see any signal that may have been left behind by Mr. Larue or Professor Jarvis."

"I think we can arrange that by flying low enough to distinguish things, but keeping off to one side of the path and parallel to it," suggested Ted. "My hunch is that that poison mounts directly upward. At any rate, it must be stronger there than it will be to one side. We'll try it, anyway, for a while, and if we should begin to feel dizzy, we'll sheer off."

They followed this plan and found that, although once in a while they caught a whiff of the sickly sweet perfume, it was not enough to bother them.

For another half hour they kept on parallel to the trail that seemed to have no end. Then Hapworth gave a sharp exclamation.

"I see something fluttering from a bush!" he cried. "Look!" and he pointed to a clump of bushes a little way off to the right.

"Sure enough," said Ted, as he confirmed the discovery. "It may mean something and it may mean nothing. But we're surely going to take a look at it."

At a little distance was a clearing that seemed to offer a possible landing place. Ted brought the plane to the ground without much difficulty. All climbed out and made for the spot in question.

"Tie a handkerchief over nose and mouth, fellows," counseled Ted. "We've got to go close to those yellow flowers. We'll make a quick snatch at that cloth, whatever it is, and make a quick sneak back to the plane before we examine it. For that matter, there's no need for more than one to go close. You stand off here a little way while I yank the thing loose."

He hastened to the bush, where he found what seemed to be a handkerchief, though it was so discolored and torn by wind and rain that he was not sure. He snatched it from the thorn bush to which it was attached and the party hastened back to the plane.

"It's a handkerchief all right," pronounced Ted, as they studied the thing with breathless interest, "and it must be a white man's, for the jungle natives don't use such things.

Either Mr. Larue's or Professor Jarvis's. They left it as a signal."

"That's proof then that they weren't killed right after capture!" exclaimed Mark.

"True enough," assented Jack. "But they've had plenty of time to kill them since."

"What's that down in the corner?" asked Hapworth.

"Looks like initials," said Ted. "So it is. Blurred a little. L.H. No, I've got them turned around. H.L. Hamilton Larue!"

CHAPTER XXIII

Captured

The aviators looked at each other, their eyes shining with excitement.

"Hot on the trail!" exclaimed Ted. "Now, fellows, here's where we're going to see action. Tighten your belts and get your weapons ready. The end of this chase is in sight."

He looked up at the sun, which was beginning to sink toward the west.

"We must be somewhere near the maloca of Durondo," he said. "We've followed the track of these yellow flowers so long that we must be near the end. I'd like to reach it before the sun goes down, if we can. Then, under the shelter of the darkness, we may have a chance to creep into the village and find out how things stand. Jump in, fellows, and we'll get going."

All climbed into the plane with alacrity and Ted, after a short run, lifted it into the air.

"Keep your eyes open for the first sign of huts or smoke," he counseled his companions. "The instant you see either of them I'll slow

down, for I don't want them to catch sight of the plane."

It was just on the edge of dark that Hapworth grabbed Ted's shoulder.

"There are thin threads of smoke rising from behind that hill," he cautioned. "Pipe down, old boy."

"A good many of them," said Ted, as he slowed up his engine. "There's a village there, all right. Squaws getting ready for supper. Mighty glad that hill is in the way."

The hearts of all were beating fast as Ted Scott found a suitable landing place and spiraled down to it. By the time they landed it was almost fully dark.

They had seen no sign of any human being and were confident that their descent had not been discovered.

"So far, so good," observed Ted, with a sigh of relief.

"What's the next step?" asked Hapworth. "All the guns are ready and loaded."

"The next thing is to get information," replied Ted. "We've got to find out just where the village lies, how many braves are in it—let's hope a lot of them are away on some hunting expedition—and above all just where Mr. Larue and Professor Jarvis are being held, if they're still alive. We'll get a bite of supper now and then I'm off to do a little scouting."

"We'll all go with you," declared Hapworth.

"You bet we will!" cried Mark and Jack in chorus.

Ted shook his head.

"No," he said. "One can do better than four. The more we are the greater the chance of being discovered."

"Well, then, let's draw lots to see which one it will be," proposed Mark.

"No," insisted Ted. "I got you fellows into this and it's up to me to do the scouting. I'll promise to be mighty careful and take no unnecessary chances. I'll take my revolver with me and slip a couple of bombs into my pocket. I hope I won't have to use them, for then the head-hunters would be forewarned and the fat would be in the fire. Everything in this matter depends upon surprise. We can't lick a whole tribe of Indians. We've got to catch them napping. If things go all right, I'll be back in a little while. If I'm not here by midnight, you'll know that they've got me. Then you'll have to be guided by circumstances and do what you think best."

His comrades shifted uneasily.

"Doesn't seem at all right to me to let you go alone into that hornets' nest," vouchsafed Walter Hapworth.

"Couldn't we at least follow you at a little distance?" urged Mark. "Then, if you were

nabbed, we could make a dash to rescue you."

"No," insisted Ted. "The plane can't be left alone. That plane is the strongest trump in our hand. We must hold on to it at all costs."

He bent down and scooped up a handful of reddish clay. With this he rubbed his face and neck and hands until in appearance he was as dark as any Indian.

"Root for me, boys," he said, with a laugh, as he slipped some bombs into his pocket and fingered the knife and revolver in his belt. "I'm off."

Ted Scott stole away in the darkness and soon vanished from the sight of his companions.

While still in the air he had made a careful study of the ground in the vicinity and had detected a trail that led up to and over the top of the hill.

This he found without great difficulty and began his climb. He moved with great caution, lest any crackling twig should betray his presence to an enemy, supposing any such should be on guard.

He did not think, however, that any sentries would be posted. The Trail of the Yellow Death was a sufficient protection for Durondo's warriors against the incursion of any raiding tribe. That enemies could come upon them from the air was beyond their comprehension.

Foot by foot the daring young aviator made his way up the hill, stopping at intervals to listen for any suspicious sounds. There was nothing audible but the insect hum of the jungle and now and then the distant howl of a beast of prey stalking or capturing his victim.

Nearing the top of the ascent, he threw himself down on hands and knees and crawled to the summit, lest the outline of his figure against the sky should be perceived.

Before him on a broad plateau was a large aggregation of huts that betokened a village of considerable size. Gleams of light came through doors and windows of nearly all the houses. In some of the huts Ted could faintly perceive figures moving about.

What surprised him most of all was the sight of a huge stone building that rose to a considerable height on the farthest outskirts of the village. He knew enough of the jungle to be sure that a structure of that kind had not been built by present-day natives. Doubtless it was some relic of an earlier and long-forgotten civilization.

After pondering the matter, Ted concluded that in that gloomy structure he would find the key to his problem. He resolved to reach it, if he could.

He made his way cautiously down the hill toward the village. A heavy patch of woodland

intervened between him and the nearest houses, so that he was largely screened from observation. It was when he should reach those houses that his real difficulties would begin.

He had reached the outskirts of the town. He knew that in less than an hour the moon would rise. Whatever he had to do must be done quickly.

He saw what seemed to be a straggling, irregular street, passing between the line of huts and extending in the direction of the stone building he had noted.

For the moment this roadway seemed to be deserted. Evidently it was supper time for the head-hunters.

He debated whether he should stroll boldly along that street, trusting to be taken by anyone he should meet for one of themselves. After a moment's thought he dismissed this as too great a risk. In the general darkness his clay-stained hands and face might pass muster. But his gait, so different from that of a jungle Indian, might arouse suspicion. His clothes, too, where every one went half-naked, his voice, if he were asked a question, would betray him. No, it was too hazardous.

He made a wide circuit and got among the brush and trees in the rear of one of the line of houses. Then, with great stealth, he crept along, on his feet where the brush was high

and thick, on hands and knees at places where it thinned out.

A dog barked.

This was a danger that Ted had not foreseen. Had the brute scented him?

He dropped flat on his face and lay as rigid as a statue, his heart beating hard. He gripped his knife. If the dog found him, that knife would silence the animal.

But the barking ceased, and after a few moments of strained listening Ted resumed his journey.

He was worming his way along like a snake when something heavy descended on his head. A myriad of stars glittered before his eyes. Then the stars went out and Ted Scott's senses went out with them.

When Ted again awoke to consciousness his first sensation was one of excruciating pain. His head ached. His brain was reeling. His eyes shrank before the gleam of torches. His hands and feet were tightly bound.

He was lying on his back on the ground. Above him hovered a group of savage faces, daubed with paint. They were the kind of faces one sees in nightmares.

One of the group towered over the others and from his fantastic regalia and the deference

paid him by the others Ted judged, rightly, that he was the chief, Durondo.

The chief took a long, wicked-looking knife and bent down over his captive. The cold steel pressed on the prisoner's neck. Ted thought that his last hour had come and braced himself to die.

But it was only the back of the knife that was drawn lingeringly across his throat. Durondo had other views regarding his captive. He must not be allowed to die too quickly. There must be torture long drawn out. He would not rob his people of the pleasure of gloating over the white youth's screams and writhings. It would be rare sport, a great festival. He licked his lips with infernal satisfaction.

He exchanged a few words with his warriors and four of them picked Ted up and bore him off upon their shoulders.

The young aviator's blood ran cold as he pondered his terrible situation. It was not wholly of himself that he thought, though he might have been pardoned if he had.

There was Grace Larue, whose hopes of having her father and her lover restored to her were doomed. There were Eben and Charity, whose hearts would be broken. There were Walter, Mark, and Jack, who, now that the presence of one white man was known, might

be hunted out and overcome by sheer force of numbers.

For some time his bearers pursued their way. At the foot of a massive ruined building they paused for a moment. Then they resumed their tramp, but this time they were moving upward, up and up a stone spiral staircase.

On a broad landing they paused and spoke to a man squatting at a heavy door, evidently on guard. A few guttural words and the guard drew some massive bolts and pushed open the door.

The men carried Ted in and deposited him none too gently on the floor of a room lighted by a single flickering torch. Then they withdrew, and Ted heard the bolts again shot into their sockets.

There was a movement in the room. A hand snatched the torch from its holder in the wall. Two faces bent over Ted.

Despite lines worn by care and suffering, Ted knew those faces. They belonged to those whose portraits Grace had shown him.

Hamilton Larue and Dayton Jarvis!

CHAPTER XXIV

A Dash for Freedom

Two conflicting emotions tore at Ted Scott's heart as he recognized the missing explorers —joy and anguish.

Joy at knowing that they were still alive; anguish at the thought that now that he had found them he could not help them. Instead of being a deliverer, he was a prisoner like themselves!

It was Dayton Jarvis who first spoke.

"Another captive of the head-hunters!" he exclaimed. "An Indian, by the color of his skin."

"But not by his features!" ejaculated Hamilton Larue, holding the torch still closer. "They're those of a white man. And his clothes—why, they're the togs of an aviator! What on earth does it mean?"

"If you'll hold that torch a little farther from my eyes, I'll tell you, Mr. Larue," said Ted, trying to rise to a sitting position.

Both men started back in bewilderment.

"You know me?" asked the explorer in astonishment.

"Yes. And Dayton Jarvis, too," replied Ted, who, if the situation had been less ghastly, would have enjoyed their mystification. "I know all about you, although I've never seen you before in my life. I wish, though, that our first meeting had been under different circumstances."

Mr. Larue and Professor Jarvis stared at Ted and then at each other as though they could not believe their ears.

"Am I dreaming?" muttered the older scientist. "Or am I going mad?"

"Neither," replied Ted. "Listen. My name is Scott—Ted Scott——"

Professor Jarvis started.

"Not *the* Ted Scott?" he asked.

"I suppose so," assented Ted. "But that's neither here nor there. I met your daughter, Mr. Larue, in the States. She saved my life in a blizzard. When she learned that you and Professor Jarvis were captured she turned to me. I got three others to help me, and we flew in a plane to Brazil. I saw Mr. Allen. He gave me what directions he could. My companions and I have been hunting for you all over the jungle. This afternoon we discovered this place and came down. I left the plane a little way from here in charge of my comrades

and came here to do some scouting. Some natives surprised me and knocked me out with a club. You know the rest. That's the whole story in a nutshell. But it isn't how I got here that counts. It's how we're going to get away from here that's the important thing. Now, if you'll help me get rid of these confounded ropes, we'll talk it over and see what can be done."

The two men had come out of their stupefaction now and were wild with gratitude and renewed hope. There seemed to be little enough reason for hope, but the magic of Ted Scott's name inspired it. They, like the rest of the world, had grown so used to having him do things that others had declared to be impossible that they felt nothing he attempted could fail.

They worked with all their might at the ropes and soon had them unfastened. Then Ted got to his feet and rubbed his arms and legs—a task in which his companions gladly assisted him—until the circulation had been fully restored.

With the return of his physical strength and freedom of limb, Ted's spirits rose. He did not disguise from himself that he and those he had come to help were in a frightful situation. But not for a minute did he despair. He had been in terrible plights before and that quick

brain of his and his dauntless courage had enabled him to win through.

"To think," ejaculated Mr. Larue, "that you should risk your lives—you and your companions—to come on such a desperate quest as this for people whom you had never seen! It is the most splendid thing I ever heard of!"

"It is magnificent," declared Dayton Jarvis warmly. "But when one is Ted Scott he does magnificent things."

Ted waved the tribute aside.

"You praise me too highly," he said. "But now let's get down to seeing what we can do. The head-hunters have won the first round. But the fight isn't over yet by a long shot. What are Durondo's plans, as far as you know them? He's allowed you to live so far. Is he holding you for ransom? Is he planning to kill you? Tell me all you know."

"There's no question of ransom," returned Mr. Larue. "The fellow's much too brutal and stupid to carry on negotiations and too fearful that the craft of the white men would trap him if he did. No, he's planning to kill us and to do it with the utmost torture that he can imagine. He has told us as much—you know I understand the jungle languages—and the only reason he hasn't done it before is that he wants to make a big festival of it. From talk of

the guards that I've overheard that festival is set for to-morrow or the next day, I'm not sure which. He's sent couriers to all the other villages of his tribe inviting the people to come and enjoy themselves in seeing the white prisoners die."

"And now I suppose the old scoundrel is hugging himself because he has three victims instead of two," said Ted. "But we're far from being dead men yet."

"We haven't been idle," put in Professor Jarvis. "In fact, we had a plan that we'd expected to try this very night. A forlorn hope, but all that we had."

"What is it?" asked Ted eagerly.

With a cautious look at the bolted door, the two explorers took Ted to the back of the room. The wall there was of stone—oblong blocks held together by rough mortar.

"We've worked at the mortar around this stone," whispered Mr. Larue, "until we've loosened it so that this block"—tapping on one of them—"can be taken out. A body can pass through the opening. What lies beyond we do not know. We threw a bit of stone through and heard it fall on what sounded like a stone floor. It may be a corridor or another room of this old ruined castle. Whether from that we can reach the open air I do not know. We may be

trapped there like rats. But we couldn't be any worse off and we were going to take a chance."

"We admitted to ourselves that the chances were a hundred to one against us," put in Professor Jarvis. "Even if we got into the open air, they would probably pursue and catch us. But we believed that we could get clubs in the jungle, anyway, and put up such a fight that they'd have to kill us outright. It would be some comfort to die fighting."

Ted pondered deeply for several minutes.

"How often do they change the guard at this door?" he asked.

"Night and morning," was the reply. "This place seems so secure with its bolts that they think one man at a time is sufficient. This sentry at the door came on just before you were brought in. He'll keep guard till morning."

"Does he ever look inside?" asked Ted.

"About every hour he opens the door and pokes his head in," replied Mr. Larue. "Then he shuts and bolts it again."

"I see," murmured Ted. "Then if we passed through this opening, it wouldn't be more than an hour, anyway, before the guard would discover that the room was empty."

"Right!"

"Not time enough," muttered Ted. "If the place beyond this wall is a corridor or a room

of these old ruins, we may be hours finding our way to the open air. Tell me. These fellows carried me up a lot of stone stairs. What's at the foot of those stairs?"

"Picked braves of the head-hunters are camped there to the number of thirty or more," answered Professor Jarvis. "Nothing can get past them. They'd kill us off before we could get near them. That's one reason why they have only one guard at the head of the staircase."

"Not so good," mused Ted. "The hole in the wall seems to be our best chance. But we need more time than the hourly peep of the guard gives us. Is he about due now?"

"Very soon, I think," replied Mr. Larue.

"I think he's in for a surprise and possibly a headache," said Ted, who had been formulating his plans rapidly. "When next he opens the door I want him to do more than look in. I want him to come in."

The two explorers stared at Ted in bewilderment.

"Listen," went on Ted. "Our lives may depend on this. When you hear the bolts slip back I want you men to go at each other hammer and tongs as though you were trying to knock each other out. Will you do this?"

"Of course, if you say so," replied Mr. Larue. "But why?"

"He'll be startled, and run in to separate you, or at least to see what the trouble is," explained Ted. "I'll tend to the rest."

"You mean that you're going to attack him?" asked Mr. Larue.

"I have an idea that he'll get that impression," replied Ted, with a grim smile.

"But they've taken away your weapons," ejaculated Professor Jarvis.

"I have these," returned Ted, spreading his sinewy hands. "They've served me before and they'll serve me again. Now I'm going to get behind this door. As soon as I hear this fellow moving I'll raise my hand and you go at each other like a pair of Kilkenny cats."

He stole behind the door and stood there with his muscles as tense as those of a wildcat.

A few minutes passed and Ted raised his hand.

His companions sprang into action at once and were to all appearances fighting desperately when the door partly opened and the guard thrust in his head.

There was a grunt of surprise and alarm and the fellow leaped inside.

CHAPTER XXV

A Desperate Struggle

Before the guard had taken two steps Ted Scott launched himself upon him like a thunderbolt.

A terrific crash in the jaw from Ted's clenched fist sent the Indian staggering backward.

Before the savage could recover from the daring young aviator's blow, Ted Scott's powerful hands had clutched his throat, choking off the cry that was rising to his lips.

At the same time Ted tripped his antagonist and the two fell to the floor with Ted uppermost.

In falling, the native's head struck the stone floor with a fearful thump. The fellow went limp. But Ted was taking no chances and retained his strangling clutch until he knew beyond peradventure that his enemy was utterly unconscious.

Then he arose and softly closed the door.

"Now," panted Ted to his companions.

"bring those ropes you took off me and tie this fellow up. Work quickly, for every minute counts. Get a gag ready, too. We won't use it till he shows signs of coming to, for he needs all the breath he can get just now, and I don't want to kill him. But have it ready."

While the two explorers sprang eagerly to the work, Ted took the native's knife from his belt and picked up the spear that had fallen to the floor.

"This is a windfall," he said with satisfaction. "One of you can take the knife and the other the spear. If we have to die, perhaps we can take some of those fellows with us."

"But what will you do?" asked Mr. Larue. "Those fists of yours, mighty as they are, can't prevail against cold steel."

Ted smiled as he took a small spherical object from his pocket.

"The head-hunters took my revolver and my knife," he said, "but they overlooked this bomb and another of the same kind that I have in my pocket. They saw them, of course, but didn't bother because they didn't know that they were weapons. They may find before long that they're far more deadly than either knife or revolver."

The guard now was trussed up like a fowl, and as he showed signs of returning to consciousness Professor Jarvis gagged him thor-

oughly and dragged him off into a corner.

"Now," said Ted, "we'll find out what there is on the other side of this wall."

By their united efforts they removed the heavy block of stone and gazed into the yawning darkness beyond.

Ted picked up a piece of mortar and dropped it on the other side of the hole. Almost instantly it struck something hard.

"Not much of a drop," pronounced Ted. "Maybe half a dozen feet. I'll go through first and hang on. Then you pass the torch through and I'll take a look."

He suited the action to the word.

"As I thought," he whispered back, after he had swept the torch around. "An easy drop. Come along."

The explorers followed the young airman. They found themselves in a stone passage from which a number of other passages branched off in every direction.

"A regular labyrinth," muttered Ted. "A mighty easy place to get separated in, unless we keep close together. Come close behind me while we try to find an exit."

He led the way, holding the torch aloft, and the explorers followed in his footsteps.

The place was as black as night. The floors and walls were humid with damp and mold and the air was so close as to be barely breathable.

The shadows thrown on the walls by the flickering torch assumed ghastly and grotesque shapes.

"The moon must have risen by this time," said Ted, "and if there's any rent or opening here, any exit to the open air, it will probably betray itself by the moonlight sifting through. Keep your eyes open for the least ray of light anywhere."

Though the fugitives strained their eyes as they moved along, no such harbinger of hope appeared.

At times they would come to shapeless masses of masonry where the building had in part succumbed to the ravages of time. Sometimes they were able to clamber over these or go around them. Often, however, they were impassable, and the fugitives had to take some one of the branching by-passages.

Any one of these, however, was as likely to lead to safety as any other, and they tramped along, trying to keep hope alive in their hearts by telling themselves that at any turn they might see the precious rays of moonlight or feel some vagrant draught of air that might lead them to some opening into the world above.

And as they went they listened for any sound from behind, which might tell them that their escape had been discovered. They were not wholly without apprehension that someone

might come to the dungeon in which the Indian lay bound. Although the guard was not changed usually before morning, there might at any time be a departure from that custom. Perhaps Durondo himself might come to gloat over his prisoners and detail to them with fiendish glee the tortures he had decreed for them.

An hour passed, perhaps two. They had no way of telling what time had elapsed. If they escaped at all, they must do so before dawn. By that time their flight would certainly be known. Then the labyrinth would be filled with yelling savages who would hunt them down and either kill or recapture them. There would be no further chance of escape. Death in frightful forms would be their portion.

Now a new terror was added to their plight. *The torch was going out!*

Already it had burned down so far that Ted's hands were almost blistered from the heat. They had no substitute, not even matches, that, struck from time to time, might help to guide their feet and illumine the gloom.

Ted halted.

"Seems to be no way out," he announced.

"I fear not," murmured Mr. Larue.

"But if we stay here, we're hopelessly trapped," went on Ted. "Looks as though our best plan is to try to find our way back to the cell we left. From there we can at least get

to the outer air. Then we'll cut our way through the savages or die in the attempt."

It was the counsel of desperation, but it was the only thing left and the young aviator's companions recognized it.

But when they sought to retrace their steps they found to their consternation that they were hopelessly lost. As Ted had said, the place was a perfect labyrinth and they had made so many turnings and traversed so many passages that they had lost all sense of direction.

They hurried on, however, frantically seeking to get back to the sinister place from which a little while before they had just as frantically tried to escape.

A few minutes of this frenzied searching and the torch sputtered and went out. With it their last chance seemed to be extinguished. For all their eyes aided them, they might as well have been blind.

But, desperate as their case was, Ted Scott refused to despair. His indomitable will sustained him. He would fight on to the last gasp.

Another half hour of fruitless effort, and then Ted halted abruptly.

"Listen!" he whispered to his companions. "I think I hear something."

They stood as rigid as statues.

Sure enough, there was a soft padding as

though something or someone were moving stealthily about.

"Give me your knife," whispered Ted to Professor Jarvis, and the latter handed it over.

Ted's fingers tightened on the haft of the weapon.

"Senhor," came a low voice from the darkness.

"Who speaks?" gritted Ted.

"It is Muri," came the voice. "Muri, whom the white man saved from the jaguar. Muri has come to help."

Ted's grip on the knife relaxed.

"Let Muri come near," he commanded.

A moment later the Indian had joined the party.

"Muri saw the capture of the senhor," the newcomer murmured. "He has not forgotten that the white senhors saved his life. Muri found his way to the prison. He saw the hole in the wall and he knew what had happened. He has come to guide."

Eager questionings followed. The Indian spoke a mixture of Portuguese and jungle patois, and where Ted found it difficult to follow Mr. Larue helped out.

"Muri knows a way to the outer air?" asked Ted quickly.

"Yes," was the reply. "There are two ways.

One is by the staircase that the white senhor knows. But there are many men there and to go that way means death. There is another staircase on the far side that leads into the jungle. Muri does not think there will be many watching that, for they know that the only way from the prison room is by the other staircase. Come!"

The whites followed the Indian, their hearts beating high with renewed hope. At their last extremity help had come!

Muri threaded his way through the passages with the dexterity of a snake and they kept close behind him. In a very few minutes he reached the foot of a long flight of stairs and began the ascent.

They had nearly reached the top when they heard from somewhere without a chorus of savage yells. Muffled as they were by the stone walls, they struck like a knell on the heart of the fugitives.

There was only one meaning to those yells. Their escape had been discovered.

They scaled the few remaining steps and Muri pushed back a door through which they rushed.

They found themselves on a high platform, from which a circular staircase, resembling somewhat the main one on the other side of the building, reached to the ground.

"Hurry!" panted Muri. "If the braves have discovered the displaced stone in the prison wall, they will remember this staircase and they will come to guard it, many of them. Hurry!"

With this parting word he vanished into the blackness from which they had just emerged.

Down the steps went Ted Scott and his companions with a rush.

As they reached a turning, Ted, in the van, came face to face with a native running upward.

Ted had handed the knife back to Dayton Jarvis and had no weapon save the bombs, and he was too close to his enemy to use one of them.

His fist shot out and drove the Indian against the stone wall of the staircase. Like lightning he grabbed the man by throat and leg and by a mighty effort hurled him over the balustrade. He heard the body go crashing through a tree to the ground.

On the fugitives rushed until they reached the last flight.

There below them at the foot of the steps was a horde of head-hunters with spears and knives that glittered in the moonlight. Others were pouring from every direction.

"Use your knife, Jarvis, your spear, Mr. Larue!" shouted Ted, as he drew his bombs from his pocket. "Come on!"

He threw one of the bombs and plunged on down the steps.

There was a terrific explosion at the foot of the steps and a howl of consternation and terror. The savages drew back for a moment, leaving several of their number on the ground.

Ted hurled the other bomb with similar effect. The next instant, taking advantage of the confusion, Ted Scott and his companions were in the midst of the horde, Ted's arms working like flails, Dayton Jarvis plying his knife and Mr. Larue thrusting with his spear.

Ted wrested a spear from the nearest head-hunter and, using it as a club, cleared a wide space with every sweep of his powerful arms.

It was a terrific fight, and in the consternation caused by the bombs, Ted thought he saw a chance to win through.

But now that the first panic had passed the savages began to rally and press forward. It was like an oncoming wave that threatened to envelop the gallant trio.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Three rifles spoke and from the rear came rushing Walter Hapworth, Mark Lawson and Jack Forrest, firing as they came.

Taken in front and rear, terrified by the rifles, not knowing how many their opponents might be, the head-hunters broke and ran in utter panic and confusion.

"Bully, boys!" panted Ted, as the two parties united. "Just in the nick of time! Now for the plane before these fellows get their wits back."

The whites ran like deer through the village, made their way up the hill and down on the other side. Before they reached the plane they heard the sounds of pursuit behind them and, looking back, saw a host of savages pouring over the top of the hill.

"Give them a volley, fellows!" directed Ted.

The rifles spoke and the oncoming of the head-hunters was momentarily checked. But they rallied and came on again.

After the fusillade the fugitives had resumed their flight and reached the plane. They tumbled in after Mark had given a turn to the propellers and Ted had slipped into his seat and taken charge of the control.

The engine roared. The *Rescue* leaped forward.

But now the vengeful savages were frightfully near.

"Lie low, fellows," commanded Ted, as he gave the machine full throttle.

A rain of arrows beat against the side of the plane, but none found its mark. A few moments more and the *Rescue* lifted and swept upward out of range.

Ted grinned as he looked down on the danc-

ing, frenzied horde shaking their spears and yelling with baffled rage.

"Too bad, old fellows, to leave you like this; but the best of friends must part," he mocked.

He turned the nose of the plane toward Alega and the *Rescue* sped along like a silver streak in the moonlight.

Then came a tumult of questions and answers, exclamations of delight and congratulation.

"We waited till midnight as you directed, Ted," explained Walter Hapworth. "Then we knew that you must have been nabbed. So we set out on your trail. You know the rest."

"You fellows were putting up a wonderful fight!" exclaimed Mark in admiration.

"Sure going like wildcats," added Jack.

"We were doing our little best," said Ted; "but, Jove, what music your shots made when they rang out!"

Straight as an arrow the *Rescue* sped on its way until it reached Alega. There they found Allen. To their delight they found, too, that Sancha, owing to the unremitting care of his comrade, had pulled through and, though still weak, was on his way to sure recovery.

The meeting of the long separated explorers was affecting, and the praises that they heaped on Ted Scott made that hero redden to the ears. Nor was the bravery of Walter Hapworth, Mark

Lawson and Jack Forrest without its full meed of praise.

With all the party on board, the plane stopped at Garuba, whence a cable was sent to Mrs. Larue telling her of the safety of her husband and Dayton Jarvis. Ted sent an affectionate message also to Eben and Charity.

While they were in Garuba they got into communication by telegraph with the two explorers who had escaped and who were in Rio de Janeiro trying to organize a party to go to the rescue of their companions. Not much headway had been made and the two men were glad to cease their efforts and telegraphed that they would take steamer from the Brazilian capital for the United States at once.

Then the *Rescue* spread her wings and flew over the ocean to the United States, which it reached in due time and without further misadventure. Straight across country it then darted to the farm where the mother and daughter were waiting.

There are some things that words cannot picture and one is the meeting of Mrs. Larue and her husband and of Grace with her father and her lover. Tears and embraces, love and delight beyond imagining! And what they said to Ted—well, it was good that he had a nature that could not be spoiled by praise that almost amounted to worship.

Then back to Bromville, where Eben and Charity folded Ted Scott in their arms with relief and joy beyond expression, where the town, when it heard what had happened, gave him a tumultuous reception and where Mark Lawson and Jack Forrest found themselves heroes overnight.

"What are you touching your head for, Walter?" asked Ted of Hapworth some days later, as they were sitting on the veranda of the Bromville House.

"Thinking of the head-hunters," replied Walter, grinning. "It's a comfort to feel that the old head is still on my shoulders."

THE END

This Isn't All!

Would you like to know what became of the good friends you have made in this book?

Would you like to read other stories continuing their adventures and experiences, or other books quite as entertaining by the same author?

On the *reverse side* of the wrapper which comes with this book, you will find a wonderful list of stories which you can buy at the same store where you got this book.

Don't throw away the Wrapper

Use it as a handy catalog of the books you want some day to have. But in case you do mislay it, write to the Publishers for a complete catalog.

THE TED SCOTT FLYING STORIES

By FRANKLIN W. DIXON

Individual Colored Wrappers and Text Illustrations by
WALTER S. ROGERS
Each Volume Complete in Itself.

No subject has so thoroughly caught the imagination of young America as aviation. This series has been inspired by recent daring feats of the air, and is dedicated to Lindberg, Byrd, Chamberlin and other heroes of the skies.

OVER THE OCEAN TO PARIS;
or Ted Scott's daring long distance flight.

RESCUED IN THE CLOUDS;
or, Ted Scott, Hero of the Air.

OVER THE ROCKIES WITH THE AIR MAIL;
or, Ted Scott, Lost in the Wilderness,

FIRST STOP HONOLULU;
or, Ted Scott, over the Pacific.

THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST FLYERS;
or, Ted Scott, Over the West Indies.

SOUTH OF THE RIO GRANDE;
or, Ted Scott, On a Secret Mission.

ACROSS THE PACIFIC;
or, Ted Scott's Hop to Australia.

THE LONE EAGLE OF THE BORDER;
or, Ted Scott and the Diamond Smugglers.

FLYING AGAINST TIME;
or, Breaking the Ocean to Ocean Record.

OVER THE JUNGLE TRAILS;
or, Ted Scott and the Missing Explorers.

LOST AT THE SOUTH POLE;
or, Ted Scott in Blizzard Land.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers*, NEW YORK

THE HARDY BOY'S SERIES

By FRANKLIN W. DIXON

Individual Colored Wrappers and Text Illustrations by
WALTER S. ROGERS
Every Volume Complete in Itself.

THE HARDY BOYS are sons of a celebrated American detective, and during vacations and their off time from school they help their father by hunting down clues themselves.

THE TOWER TREASURE

A dying criminal confessed that his loot had been secreted "in the tower." It remained for the Hardy Boys to make an astonishing discovery that cleared up the mystery.

THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF

The house had been vacant and was supposed to be haunted. Mr. Hardy started to investigate—and disappeared! An odd tale, with plenty of excitement.

THE SECRET OF THE OLD MILL

Counterfeit money was in circulation, and the limit was reached when Mrs. Hardy took some from a stranger. A tale full of thrills.

THE MISSING CHUMS

Two of the Hardy Boys' chums take a motor trip down the coast. They disappear and are almost rescued by their friends when all are captured. A thrilling story of adventure.

HUNTING FOR HIDDEN GOLD

Mr. Hardy is injured in tracing some stolen gold. A hunt by the boys leads to an abandoned mine, and there things start to happen. A western story all boys will enjoy.

THE SHORE ROAD MYSTERY

Automobiles were disappearing most mysteriously from the Shore Road. It remained for the Hardy Boys to solve the mystery.

THE SECRET OF THE CAVES

When the boys reached the caves they came unexpectedly upon a queer old hermit.

THE MYSTERY OF CABIN ISLAND

A story of queer adventures on a rockbound island.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, Publishers, NEW YORK

THE TOM SWIFT SERIES

By VICTOR APPLETON

Uniform Style of Binding. Individual Colored Wrappers. Every Volume Complete in Itself.

Every boy possesses some form of inventive genius. Tom Swift is a bright, ingenious boy and his inventions and adventures make the most interesting kind of reading.

TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR CYCLE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIRSHIP
TOM SWIFT AND HIS SUBMARINE BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIRELESS MESSAGE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RUNABOUT
TOM SWIFT AMONG THE DIAMOND MAKERS
TOM SWIFT IN THE CAVES OF ICE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS SKY RACER
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RIFLE
TOM SWIFT IN THE CITY OF GOLD
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIR GLIDER
TOM SWIFT IN CAPTIVITY
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIZARD CAMERA
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GREAT SEARCHLIGHT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GIANT CANNON
TOM SWIFT AND HIS PHOTO TELEPHONE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AERIAL WARSHIP
TOM SWIFT AND HIS BIG TUNNEL
TOM SWIFT IN THE LAND OF WONDERS
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WAR TANK
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIR SCOUT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS UNDERSEA SEARCH
TOM SWIFT AMONG THE FIRE FIGHTERS
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS FLYING BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GREAT OIL GUSHER
TOM SWIFT AND HIS CHEST OF SECRETS
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIRLINE EXPRESS
TOM SWIFT CIRCLING THE GLOBE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS TALKING PICTURES
TOM SWIFT AND HIS HOUSE ON WHEELS
TOM SWIFT AND HIS BIG DIRIGIBLE

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers*, NEW YORK

THE DON STURDY SERIES

By VICTOR APPLETON

Individual Colored Wrappers and Text Illustrations by WALTER S. ROGERS
Every Volume Complete in Itself.

In company with his uncles, one a mighty hunter and the other a noted scientist, Don Sturdy travels far and wide, gaining much useful knowledge and meeting many thrilling adventures.

DON STURDY ON THE DESERT OF MYSTERY;
An engrossing tale of the Sahara Desert, of encounters with wild animals and crafty Arabs.

DON STURDY WITH THE BIG SNAKE HUNTERS;
Don's uncle, the hunter, took an order for some of the biggest snakes to be found in South America—to be delivered alive!

DON STURDY IN THE TOMBS OF GOLD;
A fascinating tale of exploration and adventure in the Valley of Kings in Egypt.

DON STURDY ACROSS THE NORTH POLE;
A great polar blizzard nearly wrecks the airship of the explorers.

DON STURDY IN THE LAND OF VOLCANOES;
An absorbing tale of adventures among the volcanoes of Alaska.

DON STURDY IN THE PORT OF LOST SHIPS;
This story is just full of exciting and fearful experiences on the sea.

DON STURDY AMONG THE GORILLAS;
A thrilling story of adventure in darkest Africa. Don is carried over a mighty waterfall into the heart of gorilla land.

DON STURDY CAPTURED BY HEAD HUNTERS;
Don and his party are wrecked in Borneo and have thrilling adventures among the head hunters.

DON STURDY IN LION LAND;
Don and his uncles organize an expedition to capture some extra large lions alive.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK

THE RADIO BOYS SERIES

(Trademark Registered)

By ALLEN CHAPMAN

Author of the "Railroad Series," Etc.

Individual Colored Wrappers. Illustrated.
Every Volume Complete in Itself.

A new series for boys giving full details of radio work, both in sending and receiving—telling how small and large amateur sets can be made and operated, and how some boys got a lot of fun and adventure out of what they did. Each volume from first to last is so thoroughly fascinating, so strictly up-to-date and accurate, we feel sure all lads will peruse them with great delight.

Each volume has a Foreword by Jack Binns, the well-known radio expert.

THE RADIO BOYS' FIRST WIRELESS
THE RADIO BOYS AT OCEAN POINT
THE RADIO BOYS AT THE SENDING STATION
THE RADIO BOYS AT MOUNTAIN PASS
THE RADIO BOYS TRAILING A VOICE
THE RADIO BOYS WITH THE FOREST RANGERS
THE RADIO BOYS WITH THE ICEBERG PATROL
THE RADIO BOYS WITH THE FLOOD FIGHTERS
THE RADIO BOYS ON SIGNAL ISLAND
THE RADIO BOYS IN GOLD VALLEY
THE RADIO BOYS AIDING THE SNOWBOUND
THE RADIO BOYS ON THE PACIFIC

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK

HALE BROS.
H6481O
50¢EA
D'64